

THE MILITARY DIMENSION OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS: INCREASING
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY FORCES THROUGH
INFORMATION OPERATIONS

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General Studies

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE MILITARY DIMENSION OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS: INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY FORCES THROUGH INFORMATION OPERATIONS, by Major Moyosore C. Akin-Ojo, 127 pages.

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This study considers military operations as a part of a holistic federal government strategy for lasting peace in the Niger Delta region. In particular, the study analyzes military information operations (IO) based on selected case studies. The research further proffers structural, doctrinal and infrastructural solutions to security forces' IO processes in the Niger Delta. These solutions, if adopted, are expected to make security forces more effective as part of the federal government's efforts to bring to a lasting and amicable end, the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta.

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ACRONYMS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CDS	Chief of Defense Staff
CNN	Cable News Network
EEFI	Essential Elements of Friendly Information
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FM	Field Manual
FSO	Full Spectrum Operations
GoN	Government of Nigeria
IO	Information Operations
JTF	Joint Task Force
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MILDEC	Military Deception
MNF-I	Multi-National Force-Iraq
NA	Nigerian Army
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPSEC	Operations Security
PRO	Public Relations Officer
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the information operations (IO) conducted in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In particular, it closely examines IO conducted by security forces in support of the overall federal government peace strategy in the region. The thesis analyzes Niger Delta IO against the current US Army doctrinal information tasks within the conceptual framework of Full Spectrum Operations (FSO), while taking into cognizance the characteristics of the contemporary operational environment.

The Niger Delta is the hub of economic activity in Nigeria. With an oil production capacity of almost 3 million barrels per day, the region accounts for 95 percent of the Nigerian government's foreign exchange earnings and is projected to provide 25 percent of US energy requirements by 2015 (Ikokwu 2008). Various factors have led to a deterioration of environmental and socio-economic conditions in the Niger Delta occasioning the indigenes' cry for resource control. The Niger Delta Crisis has lingered in spite of the presence of military forces, causing deaths, internal displacements and loss in revenue to the federal government. The instability in the region has also led, at different times, to high fuel prices in the international market (Alily 2008).

The Nigerian Armed Forces have repeatedly conducted major operations aimed at curtailing militant activities in the Niger Delta but the military action has usually served to alienate the regional populace who seem sympathetic to the cause of the militants (Asuni 2009, 14). The Government of Nigeria (GoN) recently extended unconditional amnesty to the militants; a landmark success which saw over 15,000 militants disarm (Ohia 2009). The current situation in the Niger Delta, however, still leaves much to be

desired, with the residents not satisfied with the efforts of the GoN in the region. The GoN on its own part has sunk in resources to ensure that rapid development and economic growth is witnessed in the oil rich region (International Crisis Group 2006c, 24). There appears to be a communication gap both in winning the hearts and minds of the Niger Delta populace in support of security objectives and in getting the militants to abandon their violence means.

So far, the military has been the most visible instrument of power wielded by the GoN in the Niger Delta (International Crisis Group 2006a, i). Considering the unpleasant effects of repeated military offensive actions, it is only wise to consider non lethal means that security forces could use to achieve their objectives as part of the government's peace strategy in the Niger Delta. In particular, IO could be employed to win the hearts and minds of the Niger Delta indigenes and undermine the strength of militant groups. This chapter introduces the problem by providing a background to the Niger Delta crisis, stating the research questions and acquainting the reader with the scope and significance of the study.

Background

Nigeria, a country situated in the West African region, boasts of being the most populous black nation on earth. With a population of 150 million people (2006 Census) and over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is a mix of cultures, languages and interests. Nigeria got its name from the River Niger, the major river in the country and the third longest river in Africa. The River Niger has its source in the Futa Jalon Highlands in Guinea and journeys through four countries, draining into the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean at the oil-rich Niger Delta region. The Niger Delta region, located in the south-south

geopolitical zone of Nigeria is home to the Ijaws, Itsekiris, Urhobos and over a hundred other ethnic groups with the preponderance being Ijaw people (Gascoigne 2001). See figure 1.



Figure 1. Map of the Niger Delta

Source: International Crisis Group, "Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis," *Africa Report* no. 118 (28 September 2006), 31.

The entity now known as Nigeria was formed by Great Britain with the 1914 amalgamation of the largely Muslim Hausa/Fulani northern protectorate and the predominantly Christian Yoruba and Igbo southern protectorate (Gascoigne 2001). Nigeria gained its independence from Britain in 1960 and has had its large share of travails in governance. Nigeria's history has been plagued by coups, ethnic and religious

conflicts, incompetent and corrupt governance and a civil war (1967-1970). Nigeria has spent more time under military rule than civil rule; a result of frequent coups by the military. On 29 May 1999, Nigeria returned to democratic rule and has since been governed under democratic principles (Gascoigne 2001).

Since the discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri in 1956, the Nigerian economy has been largely dependent on petroleum exports. The Niger Delta is host to such oil giants as Shell Petroleum Development Company, Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum (now African Petroleum) and Chevron (Torulagha 2004, 1). Though Nigeria has nine oil exploration states in the south, the three major oil producing states are Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers States. These will be the focal point of this research.

After over 50 years of oil exploration, the Niger Delta has little in terms of development to show for it. With hundreds of billions of dollars accruing so far in revenue from oil exportation, the region still lags behind in infrastructural development while the poverty line remains high (Ugolor 2004, 2). Successive governments and stakeholders in the oil industry have been accused of corruption and blamed for the Delta's developmental woes (Peel 2009).

Reportedly, ~~the~~ the first significant use of arms in the Niger Delta occurred in 1966 when Isaac Adaka Boro formed an Ijaw group, the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, and declared a republic" (Asuni 2009, 5). Since then, the Niger Delta region has been a flashpoint of crisis and criminal activity ranging from ethnic rivalry to illegal oil bunkering (siphoning crude oil from pipelines for sale in the international black market). Boro expressed the Ijaw people's grievance over the effects of oil exploration in the region and mobilized them to demand a fairer share of the oil proceeds. Boro's

insurrection was crushed by the federal government in 12 days and he was imprisoned for treason (Barrett 2006, 41). Though killed in 1968 during the Nigerian civil war, Boro served as a motivation for Ken Saro Wiwa, an author and activist who picked up the fight for autonomy in resource control for the people of the Niger Delta two decades later (Asuni 2009, 5). Ken Saro Wiwa, along with eight others, was executed by the General Sani Abacha junta in 1995 in an action that was largely condemned by the international community (Barrett 2006, 43).

Since the death of Ken Saro Wiwa, various armed groups have risen in the Niger Delta. Many of these groups had their roots in criminal activities but later assumed the liberation of the Niger Delta as a common cause (Hanson 2007, 2). The groups, estimated to consist of between 25,000 and 60,000 members (Asuni 2009, 3), generally come under the umbrella of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The MEND carries out terrorist and other criminal activities in a bid to disrupt the activities of the oil companies and thus coerce the GoN to bend to its resource control demands. Incidents of oil bunkering, gun fights, pipeline bombings and abductions orchestrated by these militant groups are rampant in the Niger Delta (International Crisis Group 2006a, i).

It is worthy of note that when oil exploration began in the Niger Delta, the formula for sharing the oil revenue was to return 50 percent to the oil producing region. This formula was altered during the civil war by the General Gowon government with the explanation that more funds were required to sustain the war. The formula never reverted back after the war; instead subsequent military regimes engineered further reductions of the allocation down to 1.5 percent (Barrett 2006, 42). Federal government ownership of oil resources in the country was further sealed by the Petroleum Act of 1969 and the Land

Use Act of 1978 (International Crisis Group 2006a, 4). These laws, passed by the military government and entrenched in the 1999 constitution, gave the government sole ownership and control of all mineral resources in the country (International Crisis Group 2006a, 5). The resource allocation to the Niger Delta remained at 1.5 percent until the Babangida regime, under political pressure, increased it to 3 percent and created the Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1989 (Barrett 2006, 42).

OMPADEC was created to enhance development in the Niger Delta. The establishment of the commission was, however, greeted with skepticism in the region. The commission had achieved very little before it was publicly revealed to be neck deep in mismanagement and corruption. In fact, in the first six years, OMPADEC was reorganized three times but its impact was hardly felt in the region (Barrett 2006, 42). With the advent of democracy, former President Obasanjo jacked up the allocation to the Niger Delta region to 13 percent and established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), in 2000, to take the place of OMPADEC (Barrett 2006, 42). At the inauguration of the NDDC board members, President Obasanjo read the riot act to them saying, “the Commission should not be turned into a honey pot that will serve the personal greed of anyone” (Vanguard 2001). It was not long, however, before the NDDC was riddled with accusations of corruption (International Crisis Group 2006c, 19).

The Obasanjo Government instituted a constitutional conference in 2005. The south-south delegates at the conference were vocal about their new demands; the resource allocation to the region was to be “increased to 25 percent which would be dedicated largely to new infrastructure and sustainable development of the region” (International Crisis Group 2006b, 13). The GoN looked away and the situation in the region worsened.

The current demands of the militant groups is not for 25 percent allocation but for resource control in which the region remits a portion of the oil proceeds to federal government coffers instead of looking up to the GoN for handouts (Peel 2009, 19).

In an effort to curtail the activities of the militants, and protect the economic hub of the country, the GoN militarized the Niger Delta region with the creation of a Joint Task Force (JTF) in August 2003; and the launching of Operation Restore Hope in October of the same year. The JTF is composed of the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria Police and State Security Service with an overall objective of achieving a long-term peace settlement and reinstating political and socio-economic stability in the Niger Delta. The JTF was tasked primarily to arrest the criminal activities of the militant groups in the Niger Delta, restore law and order as well as to ensure a secure and enabling environment for social and economic activities of the citizens and that of oil industries (JTF 2009).

The Nigerian Army, whose units had been in the center of the Niger Delta conflicts long before the JTF was created, had carried out major missions which had alienated the Niger Delta people. Worthy of note is the 1999 Odi invasion which was more of a reprisal attack for the villagers' alleged kidnap of some policemen. The invasion was full scale and left many civilians dead and their houses destroyed (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6). Since its creation, the JTF has also launched a number of major operations in a bid to achieve its objective. With each operation, the militants seem to be elusive and the Niger Delta people appear to be more estranged from the security forces (Asuni 2009, 14).

A major aspect of the Niger Delta crisis has been the deliberate use of IO by the militants. They seem to be the first to come out with news about their strengths and recent successes. In January 2007, the Cable News Network (CNN) hosted a documentary on the activities of the militants, coordinated by CNN's Nigerian correspondent, Jeff Koinange (Ganago 2007). The documentary portrayed the might of the militant groups, perhaps out of proportion. In all these the Nigerian security forces have been silent albeit reactive.

In May 2009, the JTF launched an all-out offensive targeted at militant bases in the region. The attacks saw many civilians displaced and much property destroyed (Rice 2009). The operation ended in a grant of unconditional amnesty and economic incentives to the militants if they would agree to disarm. The militants responded with a cease fire. Eventually, over 15,000 militants accepted the GoN's offer and their rehabilitation process is still ongoing (Ohia 2009).

It is evident from the foregoing that brute military force alone cannot resolve the Niger Delta crisis. Other dimensions of military operations must be employed if the crisis is to be resolved in the near future. It appears that the actions of the security forces have been sending the wrong message all along. The JTF and, by extension, the GoN must gain the information edge in getting out the proper message. The message must be coherent at all levels, responsive and true. By being proactive in the information plane, security forces can greatly contribute to changing the face of the conflict and help bring it sooner to a positive end.

Primary Research Question

How can security forces use IO to achieve military objectives in support of national security and the peace process in the Niger Delta region?

Secondary Research Questions

To address the primary research question, the following secondary questions would be answered:

1. What are the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis?
2. What is the nature of military operations conducted in the Niger Delta?
3. What relationship exists between the military operations conducted in the Niger Delta and the overall Federal Government strategy for peace and security in the region?
4. What role does IO play in achieving the objectives of major military operations conducted in the Niger Delta region?
5. What form of integration exists between the IO conducted by the federal government and that currently carried out by security forces in the Niger Delta?
6. What IO tasks could be brought to bear by the security forces leading to the conditions being set for a long-term solution of the Niger Delta crisis?
7. What policies could be formulated to make IO more effective in the Niger Delta?

Significance of the Study

The Niger Delta is the hub of economic activity in Nigeria. The nation is at a critical point of its history based on the conflict in the region. The economic, political and social well being of Nigeria depends largely on the stability of the Niger Delta which is

currently being largely shaped by security forces in the region. This research concentrates on IO as a means by which security forces could effectively assist in the overall federal government strategy to bring the current crisis in the Niger Delta region to a win-win endstate.

Assumptions

To answer the secondary research questions, the following assumptions have been made:

1. The crisis in the Niger Delta will cease if an amicable political solution to its causes is implemented.
2. The military operations in the Niger Delta will be continually sustained through the efforts of the JTF for as long as necessary.
3. Crude oil and its associated products will remain the major energy source in the world for, at least, the next 15 years.

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study:

Command and Control Warfare. –Command and control warfare is the integrated use of physical attack, electronic warfare, and computer network operations, supported by intelligence, to degrade, destroy, and exploit the adversary's command and control system or to deny information to it" (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-6).

Information Engagement. –Information engagement is the integrated employment of public affairs to inform U.S. and friendly audiences; psychological operations, combat camera, U.S. Government strategic communication and defense support to public

diplomacy, and other means necessary to influence foreign audiences; and, leader and Soldier engagements to support both efforts” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-3).

Information Operations. –Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one’s own information and information systems. It encompasses the employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to affect and defend information and information systems and to influence decision making” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-2).

Information Protection. –Information protection is active or passive measures that protect and defend friendly information and information systems to ensure timely, accurate, and relevant friendly information. It denies enemies, adversaries, and others the opportunity to exploit friendly information and information systems for their own purposes”(Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-7).

Militants. A generic term used to refer to the Niger Delta people involved in the armed struggle in the region operating under the auspices of any of the groups or the larger umbrella of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The term is used interchangeably with the word, insurgents, throughout the study.

Military Deception. –Military deception includes all actions conducted to mislead an enemy commander deliberately as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations. At its most successful, military deception provokes an enemy commander to commit a serious mistake that friendly forces can exploit, there or elsewhere. However,

effective military deception also introduces uncertainty into the enemy's estimate of the situation and that doubt can lead to hesitation" (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-7).

Niger Delta. The people, infrastructure and socio-economic structure of the three major oil producing states of Nigeria i.e. Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers States. In rare cases, the context will involve the whole nine oil producing states mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Operations Security. –Operations security identifies essential elements of friendly information and evaluates the risk of compromise if an adversary or enemy obtains that information...Once identified operations security experts prioritize friendly vulnerabilities and recommend countermeasures and other means of reducing the vulnerability. In some cases, the countermeasure cannot eliminate the risk, but it may reduce it to an acceptable level. Operations security includes physical security and counterintelligence. . . . Operations security contributes to achieving surprise and completing the mission with little or no loss" (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-7).

Security Forces. The term security forces is a collective term which refers to the broad range of military personnel, paramilitary and governmental agency elements working in consortium to achieve the overall GoN objective in the Niger Delta. The term is used to refer to military forces, or the JTF, in the course of the study.

Strategic Communication. Strategic Communication is –focused government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives

through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions synchronized with other elements of national power” (US Department of State, 3).

Scope

The scope of this thesis will include the operations of security forces in the Niger Delta region as it relates to the GoN’s strategic objective of maintaining security and achieving lasting peace in the region.

Limitations

The research has the following limitations:

1. The research is focused on the Niger Delta region which is about 10,000 km away. The researcher will not be able to visit the location during his research work for first hand observation. However, the researcher will make do with observations from his past visits to the area, interviews with first hand witnesses and analysis of information from primary and secondary sources in his research work.
2. The Nigerian Ministry of Defense is reluctant to release certain sensitive or classified information on the research topic to the author.

Delimitations

This research’s spotlight will be on the IO aspect of military operations in the Niger Delta. In putting IO in context, the study will examine political, social and economic factors in the Niger Delta. However, for analysis, the author will solely focus on the conduct of military operations and the role of IO in achieving strategic success. Certain aspects in the information dimension at strategic level which could bear directly on military operations in the region will also be considered.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The Niger Delta Crisis is a source of concern for not only the GoN but for other nations, especially those whose economies are directly linked to oil from the region. The crisis has been brewing and erupting intermittently over the past half century. However, the recent militancy has made the greatest impact and probably attracted greater attention than all others. Due to the fact that the current crisis is relatively recent, the bulk of information on the Niger Delta can be obtained from publications, journals and articles, especially on the internet. Books about the crisis are still being rolled out from publishing houses. Journal articles by the International Crisis Group and the Council on Foreign Relations provide an informative build up on the happenings in the Niger Delta region.

Much of the writings on the Niger Delta are from the marginalization, human rights or descriptive perspective. For example, Priye S. Torulagha's article, "The Niger Delta Oil and Western Strategic Interests: The Need for an Understanding," is an argumentative piece aimed at persuading western nations, who are beneficiaries of oil from the Niger Delta, to wade into the crisis in the region and broker peace. The Human Rights Watch article on the Niger Delta is basically humanitarian in nature while Judith Burdin Asuni's "Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta" is an informative piece.

This study will break the research into seven distinct areas to address each of the research sub questions:

1. What are the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis?

2. What is the nature of military operations conducted in the Niger Delta?
3. What relationship exists between the military operations conducted in the Niger Delta and the overall Federal Government strategy for peace and security in the region?
4. What role does IO play in achieving the objectives of major military operations conducted in the Niger Delta region?
5. What form of integration exists between the IO conducted by the federal government and those currently carried out by security forces in the Niger Delta?
6. What IO tasks could be brought to bear by the security forces leading to conditions being set for a long-term political solution of the Niger Delta crisis?
7. What policies could be formulated to make IO more effective in the Niger Delta.

The Root Causes of the Niger Delta Crisis

The root causes of the Niger Delta crisis can be followed like a trend in the works that have been published about the subject. Some works attribute the crisis to a lack of political will on the part of the GoN, others to the insensitivity of oil companies in the region, while others finger widespread and unchecked corruption as the reason for the crisis. Judith Asuni in her Council on Foreign Relations piece titled *Understanding the Armed Groups of the Niger Delta* attributes the Niger Delta Crisis to ethnic rivalry, community interaction, political corruption and the role of the military (Asuni 2009). Priye S. Torulagha, as explained in *“The Niger Delta Oil and Western Strategic Interests: The Need for an Understanding,”* sees the causes as more of the insensitive degradation of the Niger Delta environment by oil companies; a lack of political will by the GoN and the western world, who remain the greatest beneficiaries of the resource

from the region; and ineffective policies which are incapable of amenably resolving the crisis (Torulagha 2004). Stephanie Hanson in her article, “*MEND: The Niger Delta’s Umbrella Militant Group*” shows some congruence with the aforementioned authors as she highlights economic gain, political ambition and insufficient government response as the major causes of the crisis (Hanson 2007). Although Michael Peel in his book, “*A Swamp full of Dollars*” blames the west for the crisis in the Niger Delta (Peel 2009), the International Crisis Group believes, as revealed in its journal issues, that urgent government policy implementations can save the situation in the region.

A major root cause revealed by following the trend of literary works is corruption. The author refers to this corruption as being across board. Various works have described corruption of government officials, militant groups, community leaders and even senior military officers, as the bane of the Niger Delta. Barnes referred to Rikki Stancich of Transparency International as averring that “corruption in the form of bribes, unpublished fees, and contributions plague every level of the African oil industry, from Western oil executives, to middlemen, to local officials” (Barnes 2005, 4).

Lending her voice to the preceding, Asuni states that the sustenance of the MEND has been possible through patronage and funding by politicians who use them to silence opposition and help realize their political ambition, especially during election periods (Asuni 2009, 13). Hanson elaborates further on MEND’s political interest, reporting that the MEND “issued a statement asking for a certain number of seats in the Niger Delta legislature and in the National Assembly” (Hanson 2007, 4). Asuni adds that senior military and political figures employed these militants in their heydays to perpetrate their selfish criminal oil bunkering trade. She reports that the current Chief of Army Staff,

–Lieutenant General Abdurahman Dambazau upon taking over office in August 2008 admitted that some officers had become accustomed to ‘illegal duties’ and ‘involvement in criminal activities’” (Asuni 2009, 14).

Though the Chief of Army Staff’s statement has a broad base of application, the Joint Task Force (JTF) commander, Major General Sarkin Yaki Bello, in the same vein, alleged that there were corrupt elements in the armed forces, and specifically retired generals involved in illegal oil bunkering who could drag the Nigerian military’s name into the mud; and promised to publicize their names (Amaize and Arubi 2009). Worse still is the growing perception that JTF personnel are involved in illegal oil bunkering and other illicit transactions. The International Crisis Group reports that Zion Perebowei, a chief in Forcados, Delta State, in October 2008 called on the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate the past and present leadership of JTF, contending that they had been collaborating with oil thieves (International Crisis Group 2009, 5). It however appears from the works reviewed that the greatest beneficiaries of corruption in the Niger Delta are members of a highly placed cabal in the society (International Crisis Group 2006c, 12).

The trend of corruption among public officials seems to be essentially for self enrichment. The most popular corruption scandal in the oil industry is the Halliburton multi-million dollar scam on the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project in which top public officials were fingered (Ugolor 2004, 3). Accountability has for many years been poor in the Nigerian oil industry. The former head of Nigeria’s anticorruption agency, EFCC, claimed that in 2003, some 70 percent of oil revenues was stolen or wasted (Watts 2006). Such comments, revealing a brazen form of graft, may have

informed the impression in the Niger Delta that they are being milked, not for the sake of the Nigerian people, but for the sake of selfish individuals who have great influence in the political landscape of the country (International Crisis Group 2006c, 12). Though Nigeria agreed to the terms of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2003, Ugolor argues that the country is yet to see the end of graft in the oil industry as EITI has made little impact on accountability in the extraction sector (Ugolor 2004, 4).

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler have carefully studied the aspects of reducing the incidents or re-eruption of civil wars in poor countries. In investigating opportunities for conflict prevention, Collier and Hoeffler state that political and social characteristics of a country prior to conflict are largely unimportant in determining the level of risk. They reiterate that political science literature agrees that whether a country is democratic or not seems to have no significant effect on the risk of a civil war. Similarly, ethnic and religious diversity, except in extreme cases of ethnic dominance, do not also appear to be a significant risk factor (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 3). They assert that ~~the~~ risk of conflict is much higher in countries with certain economic characteristics- low per capita income, slow growth rate and dependence upon natural resource export” (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 3). They particularly mention that countries with crude oil as the primary commodity are more at risk of conflict than countries with other mineral resource dependencies. Collier and Hoeffler also state that these characteristics will persist unless adequate measures are taken to reverse the trend (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 12).

Michael Peel in his book, *“A Swamp full of Dollars,”* described the multi-faceted process by which oil money was siphoned from the nation by a past military head of state, General Sani Abacha. The money was embezzled under various subheads and

stashed up in international banks. He estimated the graft money to be at least \$3.5 billion (Peel 2009, 115). His objective in this account was to unmask western involvement in the underdevelopment of Nigeria both by political figures and by multinational companies. Torulagha gives credence to Peel's passionate complaint as he accused western nations of turning a blind eye to the happenings in the region (Torulagha 2004, 1).

The multinational oil companies have also been fingered as culprits in fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis through graft. Barnes mentioned that Transparency International and a US Senate Committee have drawn attention to the lack of transparency in these western oil companies (Barnes 2005, 4). Torulagha in his treatise asserted that the oil giants in the Niger Delta conspire with corrupt Nigerian leaders and use security forces to stifle the rights of the people while exploiting their natural deposits (Torulagha 2004, 1). The International Crisis Group reveals how these oil companies buy the allegiance of policemen by giving them enviable allowances (International Crisis Group 2006c, 7). These policemen, assigned to the oil companies by the Nigeria Police, are called spy police. Peel alludes to the activities of these spy policemen which he referred to as supernumerary police. He relates that their slogan is, ~~be~~ "practical, obedient and loyal" to the oil companies who pay them for their duties (Peel 2009, 146).

In time past, when agitation began brewing in the region, Peel maintained that the oil companies bought off villages to pacify them (Peel 2009, 161). Another level of corruption existed in those villages as the elders and chiefs would receive money in the guise of carrying out some community projects and spend it all on themselves. Was there a means of checking if such projects were executed? Not as long as the oil flowed without interference from the village youths, Peel adds. When the youths took up arms

and transformed into militants, the same oil companies tried to pacify the militants with cash sums (Peel 2009, 162). Asuni explains that in other instances, ~~money~~ given in good faith by oil companies to local communities for development projects was spent on weapons for their quasi military forces instead, further escalating tensions” (Asuni 2009, 11). But, as the International Crisis Group notes, ~~the~~ role of the oil companies in fuelling crisis in the region through inequitable distribution of revenue and infrastructure relates more to the non-fulfillment of obligations” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 14).

The militants are not left out in the corruption blame. As mentioned in the introduction, considering the background of the militants, it is evident that their cause is more selfish than ideological. The militants have mutated from cult members to ethnic militants to supposed freedom fighters (Asuni 2009, 8). Asuni states that ~~personal~~ interest plays just as important a role in understanding the Niger Delta militias’ motivations as do socioeconomic or political factors” (Asuni 2009, 21). Hanson describes them as ~~young~~ men dissatisfied at their inability to find jobs” (Hanson 2007, 1). The activities of the militant groups are largely criminal and self serving. Tight economic conditions have pushed many of the young men to join the fight. From the foregoing, it is evident that if the agitation for resource control was granted, given the present circumstances, the militants will continue with their criminal activities.

It is difficult to distinguish between a moral and legal reason for the militants’ actions in the Niger Delta. While outsiders feel that the militants’ activities are illegal, the militants claim that their actions are both moral and legal. ~~We~~ are on the right course, we are protected” is a phrase Peel attributes to Asari Dokubo, the leader of the militant

group, the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), as he recounts his interview with the latter (Peel 2009, 13). Asuni, in the same vein, describes Dokubo's attitude of legal corruption in oil bunkering. Dokubo claimed that he had a legitimate right to exploit the resources of the region on the grounds that they belonged to the local people rather than the federal government (Asuni 2009, 10).

What of the many incidents of abductions for ransom which have plagued the region? The abductees are not released when a political demand is met but rather when a sum is paid (International Crisis Group 2007, 8). This corrupt let's-be-at-peace mentality is made bare in a statement made by a Nigerian-based official of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) as related in the International Crisis Group's "Swamp of Insurgency," "it is much less expensive to pay what the militants demand than to go in and repair damaged pipelines or flow stations" (International Crisis Group 2006c, 10). An oil industry observer has compared the relationship between oil companies and militant groups to "a chronic, parasitic disease that saps strength from its victim but not enough to kill it" (International Crisis Group 2006c, 7).

Environmental degradation together with its socio-economic impact on the Niger Delta indigenes is regarded as another major cause of the Niger Delta crisis. V.T. Jike, a lecturer at the Delta State University, Abraka, in an article for the Journal for Black Studies, maintains that "the most pervasive and predominant cause of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta is petroleum exploration and ancillary problems of spillage" (Jike 2004, 689). Torulagha agrees but places the bulk of the blame on western oil companies in the Niger Delta who he claims have "pursued a narrowly focused

economic agenda” based on reaping bounties far more than they put into the societies deprived by their exploring activities (Torulagha 2004, 1).

Jike lamented the loss of productive farmlands, unemployment of virile young men and desecration of ancestral homelands to oil production operations (Jike 2004, 690). Hanson, in the same vein, pointed out that many residents who worked as fishermen have lost their occupations and now, even markets must import frozen fish as oil installations and spills have decimated the fish population (Hanson 2007, 1). The should-be fishermen have become the militants as there is no economic option for them to sustain their families. This situation, Torulagha implies, has been the impetus for the indigenes’ call for resource control (Torulagha 2004, 5). He further posits that the indigenes want economic options and a greater decentralization of the economy so that . . . they can become active participants in making economic decisions that affect their lives” (Torulagha 2004, 5).

Peel, apart from condemning the attitude of the western oil companies, decries the laxity of the GoN in not checking environmental degradation; saying such could not be tolerated in the western world. He likewise condemned the complacency of the western world who he said are only interested in the proverbial golden eggs while neglecting the goose that lays it (Peel 2009). Torulagha makes strong accusations against the oil companies who he says barely conduct any environmental assessment before engaging in exploratory activities. He adds that the poisoning and degradation of the environment fuels the anger of the people (Torulagha 2004, 9). On its part, the MEND seemed to have thrown all caution to the wind when it announced indifference about the perceptions of the international community concerning their actions lamenting that the same western

nations were responsible for their present ordeal (Amaize 2009). Hanson goes ahead to recommend that oil companies ~~make~~ efforts to partner with community organizations on development projects” (Hanson 2007, 5).

Barrels are not forever. The International Crisis Group reports that the perception of the Niger Delta people is that the reason they are still being kept as a part of Nigeria was because of their oil. This motivated the call for self determination and secession by Dokubo of the NDPVF (International Crisis Group 2006a, 6). The International Crisis Group supports this assertion with the words of an Abuja based lawyer, ~~the~~ idea by some is to hold the country together long enough to plunder the Delta. Every person of influence has an interest in the Delta, and it is that convergence of influences that has kept the country together” (International Crisis Group 2006a, 6). These are the cries of a people who feel sidelined and shut off from what they believe to be naturally theirs. The International Crisis Group however adds that the Niger Delta residents indeed desire to remain part of Nigeria but want a fairer share of the oil which they believe to be theirs (International Crisis Group 2006c, 26). The dismal level of development in the environment adds to the existing dissatisfaction of the Niger Delta populace.

Jike believes that environmental degradation has been responsible for the social disequilibrium in the region. He regards youth violence, restiveness and rebellion as various forms of reaction to the sense of alienation and impotence that the environment has imposed on the community (Jike 2004, 695). David Dafinone, a second republic senator from the region, in his *“Road Map to Peace in Niger Delta”* presentation at a forum of the Urhobo Historical Society in 2008, claimed that the degradation of the region through oil exploration had created a rural food crisis resulting in food insecurity,

poverty and its attendant ills (Dafinone 2008). The information age has added to the rate at which this dissatisfaction is flamed in the region. The ~~have-nots~~” in the Niger Delta still have television sets and radios to see how the ~~haves~~” live in plush enjoyment in capital cities. When they compare that with their environments, the International Crisis Group maintains that they are persuaded to fight for their natural possession (International Crisis Group 2006c, 24).

Activists believe that the ~~Y~~ouths Earnestly Ask for Abacha” rally, a two million-man march in Abuja in 1998, designed to perpetuate the late military ruler in office, was the trigger for violent uprisings in the Niger Delta. Youths were mobilized to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, from all over the country including large numbers from the Niger Delta region, to stage a march in support of General Abacha’s self-succession bid. The results were adverse. The Niger Delta youths saw the grandiosity of Abuja and felt bitter that they were being impoverished to fund the luxurious and illicit lives of the top class (International Crisis Group 2006c, 23). As a Delta resident reportedly put it, ~~I~~ felt angry and sick the first time I went. I wanted to leave. It was obvious that I was looking at the place where our oil money has been going and is still going” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 24).

The seeming insensitivity of past governments to the happenings in the Niger Delta has further exacerbated the crisis in the region. The International Crisis Group lamented that ~~decades~~ of peaceful protests have given way to violent militancy” (International Crisis Group 2006a, 6). The cry for resource control, as against the present revenue allocation policy, has not yet been silenced in the Niger Delta. Ebosele points out that an audit of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), the federal

government body in charge of the operations of the oil industry, revealed that from 1999 to 2004, Nigeria amassed over \$96 billion in oil revenue (Ebosele 2006). The International Crisis Group points out that the delta indigenes have had little benefit in spite of this windfall. It further mentions that a 1994 report of a federal government fact finding team observed that ~~basic~~ facilities like roads, potable water, electricity, health care and education [were] completely absent in many [Niger Delta] communities and non-functioning in others where they exist”(International Crisis Group 2006a, 6).

Barrett commented that there had been predictions long ago of a breakdown of law and order in the Niger Delta due to the lack of progress in corporate social responsibility by the western oil companies and the complacent attitude of the GoN (Barrett 2006, 40). Though it is evident that there is a lack of trust and cooperation between locals and the oil companies, Barrett writes that the Niger Delta residents widely regard the GoN as ~~having~~ collaborated with the multinational oil firms to alter the social and environmental stability of the area” (Barrett, 2006, 40). Barrett adds that the employment of security forces to quell uprisings with brute force has further grieved the delta indigenes and reiterates that ~~until~~ major concessions are made, the confrontations will not end” (Barrett 2006, 41).

Asuni believes that the ever-changing picture in the Niger Delta demands a more coherent response from the Nigerian government (Asuni 2009, 26). The International Crisis Group outrightly accused the GoN of simply pacifying the militants by such acts as freeing their incarcerated leaders instead of addressing the core grievances and demands of the Niger Delta indigenes; ~~local~~ control of oil and gas resources, greater political representation at the federal level, infrastructure development, economic empowerment

and environmental degradation” (International Crisis Group 2007, 1). The International Crisis Group accordingly urged the federal government to implement one of the recommendations of the Technical Committee; ~~im~~ immediately increasing the Delta’s allocations from oil and gas revenues from the present 13 percent to 25 percent, to be dedicated largely to new infrastructure and sustainable development of the region” (International Crisis Group 2009, 8). Asuni lends her voice to the International Crisis Group’s accusation as she warns of further violence, instability and energy insecurity in the Niger Delta if the government allows other critical issues in the region to fester (Asuni 2009, 27).

The government organs created in good faith to undertake infrastructure development in the Niger Delta still struggle to deliver. These organs created over the years have not been celebrated by the indigenes of the Niger Delta. Barrett laments that the OMPADEC, created by the General Babangida administration was considered to be a failure due to massive corruption (Barrett 2006, 42). The NDDC which followed on its heels was meant to be an improvement over its predecessor but the International Crisis Group notes that it has received ~~a~~ mixture of criticism and praise from Niger Delta indigenes” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 19). The MEND spokesman is reported as having said that ~~N~~DDC is a channel for further looting of the meager sums allocated to developing the Niger Delta” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 19).

The further creation of the Niger Delta Ministry was met with mixed reactions (International Crisis Group 2009, 10). A prominent Ijaw leader, Chief Edwin Clark, commented that ~~it~~ was a step in the right direction and evidence of political will and sagacity by the President” (International Crisis Group 2009, 10). The Ministry for Niger

Delta Affairs focuses on infrastructure development and youth empowerment (Taiwo 2008). The perceived duplicity in the roles of the Niger Delta Ministry and the NDDC has however caused the Niger Delta indigenes to receive it with apprehension (International Crisis Group 2009, 10). With the federal government reported to be owing the NDDC about \$2.2 billion (International Crisis Group 2009, 10), Kogbara concluded that, ~~the~~ the new ministry risks largely turning out to be nothing more than a glorified version of the NDDC and a cynical, expensive window-dressing” (Kogbara 2008).

Niger Delta indigenes have also complained that the lack of urgency in the GoN’s response to events in the region indicated that the government was not truly committed to its economic growth (International Crisis Group 2009, 1). The International Crisis Group adduced that there have been various fora and technical committees dedicated to finding a lasting solution to the Niger Delta imbroglio but the reports are yet to be acted upon by the GoN. The International Crisis Group, in addition, inferred that the continued silence of the GoN on the technical committee reports reveals a reliance on a solution based on force (International Crisis Group 2009, 1). The group added that the trail of broken promises by the government has jeopardized cooperation and negotiations and only justified the militants’ armed struggle (International Crisis Group 2006c, 23).

While many believe that the security forces have been the major reason why the Niger Delta crisis has not deteriorated into a civil war, others feel that the situation would have been better managed if other than the military dimension of national power was employed. Indigenes have reportedly complained that the activities of security forces give the GoN a cruel face (Asuni 2009, 14). The International Crisis Group stated that ~~residents~~ residents almost universally perceive the army, navy and police as the henchmen of a

distant government concerned primarily with securing the oil and gas industry that is the engine of the national economy. Civilian protection is seen to be a secondary concern at best” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 5). Asuni agrees that reports of human rights abuse, intimidation, extortion and criminal collaboration by security forces have been widespread (Asuni 2009, 12). The International Crisis Group reported that three supernumerary policemen working with SPDC said that ~~they~~ understood their job was to instill enough fear in people, that they would not harm company property or personnel” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 8).

The security forces in the region have also, in the past, complained of being ill-equipped. The equipment required for the Niger Delta mission is different from the conventional war armaments. The current JTF commander, Major General Sarkin-Yaki Bello, as the commander of the 2 Amphibious Brigade in Port Harcourt, was reported to have said that his operations had been ~~in~~hibited by a lack of equipment and proper medical arrangements” (Onah 2007). In the same vein, the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ganiyu Adekeye testified before a Senate Committee that it was under-equipped to fight militants and curb criminal activities in the Delta (Omonobi 2007). The police are not left out. The International Crisis Group, in an interview with a senior police officer in Delta State, recounted the lamentations of the police officer; ~~our~~ numbers need to be increased, our men need to be better trained for operations in the creeks, we need to be better equipped to carry out our duties...”(International Crisis Group 2007, 13). As the group further noted, ~~long~~-term commitment to regional security requires specialized police units and equipment” (International Crisis Group 2007, 13). In its 2009 journal article however, the International Crisis Group implied that the security forces have been

buoyed up and could boast of being better equipped than the militants (International Crisis Group 2009, 3).

The other side of the coin is that in an era in which dialogue is going on simultaneously with military operations, equipping security forces could send the wrong signals to militant groups. For example, the European Union (EU) has increased its financial grants to Nigeria with a bulk of the grants being targeted at security (International Crisis Group 2009, 16). The International Crisis Group therefore recommends that military aid in the region should “come within a broader and transparent framework of security sector reform designed to improve professionalism, accountability, human rights and the administration of justice with regard to security personnel involved in oil related crimes” (International Crisis Group 2009, 16).

The literature considered to expose the origin of the Niger Delta crisis have put corruption, environmental degradation, government neglect and the insensitivity of multinational oil companies operating in the region, at the forefront, as the root causes. While corruption is blamed on all levels of government, the community and the militants; the western oil companies and the GoN have been censured for respectively causing and permitting environmental degradation in the region. The growth of militancy in the face of a stronger but non-adaptive military occupation force coupled with inadequate visible developmental initiatives which could be exploited by IO has been identified as another reason why the insurgency continues to fester.

The Nature of Military Operations Conducted in the Niger Delta

In order to understand the nature of military operations conducted in the Niger Delta, the character and motivation of the militants must be investigated and weighed

against the mandate and capabilities of security forces in the region. Nnamdi K. Obasi, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, is reported to have described the MEND as being more sophisticated than most militant groups of the past. He added that the ~~M~~MEND's leaders are educated, some at the university level, and they have learnt from militant movements in other parts of the world" (Hanson 2007, 2).

Militants regularly carry out terrorist attacks against oil infrastructure (International Crisis Group 2006a, i) and have been responsible for at least four car bombings including the 15 March 2010 bombings in Delta State, close to the venue of talks on the nascent amnesty program involving former militants in the region (Adebayo and Isine 2010). Hanson however noted that the ~~m~~militants' primary tactic is kidnapping foreign oil workers" for ransom (Hanson 2007, 3). The militants have progressively grown more daring and even increased their operational reach to offshore facilities like the Bonga facility, one hundred and twenty kilometers from mainland which was attacked on 19 June 2008 (International Crisis Group 2009, 3).

The militants are well equipped though not nearly as trained as security forces. Funds seem to be the least problem that the militants worry about. Apart from hostage taking mentioned earlier, the International Crisis Group has documented cases of oil companies using third parties to pay militant leaders to provide security to oil installations (International Crisis Group 2006c, 9). Criminal oil bunkering has also been another major source of funding for the militants. Princeton N. Lyman, in his foreword to Asuni's study report, mentioned that the proceeds from crude oil stolen by militants in collusion with corrupt politicians and other officials have ~~f~~inanced a steadily increased sophistication of arms flowing to the militant groups" (Asuni 2009, 1). Militants have

reportedly been seen with costly advanced weapons including shoulder-mounted rocket launchers and even the Czech-made Ranchot UK-68 machine guns (Hanson 2007, 3). In fact, the amnesty spokeswoman, Timiebi Koripamo-Agary, commented that ~~the~~ amnesty deal is the saving grace for the country as the quantity, quality and sophistication of weapons including gunboats so far surrendered, put in graphic terms the seriousness of the conflict in the area and the danger we all face as a nation” (Tehrantimes 2009).

Asuni described the MEND as a ~~eh~~anging mass of groups” adding that ~~it~~ is difficult to distinguish between them” (Asuni 2009, 3). She further outlined their motivation as including ~~greed~~; a desire to avenge the deaths of friends and family; a vague desire for prestige; and coercion from members of armed groups” (Asuni 2009, 7). Though the militants would want to give the impression that they are united, Asuni observed that they were fragmented and diverse (Asuni, 2009, 19). In her words, ~~the~~ MEND was never a coherent entity, but rather an umbrella group that contained a constantly shifting lineup of militants” (Asuni 2009, 19).

As advantageous as Asuni’s observation may sound to security forces, the International Crisis Group sketches another problem based on this fragmentation. In narrating an interview with the executive director of Civitas Company in Nigeria, the director reportedly agreed that the military had done a good job in that it had reduced the power of a group in the Niger Delta crisis. He however expressed pessimism about the Niger Delta problem being solved because according to him, ~~there~~ are many groups involved.” (International Crisis Group 2007, 11).

There is also no gainsaying the fact that the militants are better acquainted with the environment than security forces. Hanson highlighted that ~~the~~ Delta militants know

the region more than Nigeria's security agencies" (Hanson 2007, 4). Jennifer Giroux said ~~MEND~~ employs a variety of tactics that require sophisticated arms, familiarity with the Delta mangroves, and methods that produce significant damage." (Giroux 2008, 15). The International Crisis Group concurs and warns that ~~if~~ a sustained effort to defeat MEND militarily succeeded, it would likely shut down oil production in the Delta for up to two years, not to mention precipitate new and more radicalized militants" (Hanson 2007, 4).

The military presence in the Niger Delta is codenamed Operation Restore Hope. The mandate of this operation, conducted by the JTF, is to ensure a secure and enabling environment for social and economic activities of the citizens and that of oil industries (JTF 2009). This mandate demands an incisive use of force to protect the citizenry while eliminating the insurgents. The International Crisis Group mentioned that the JTF ~~detachments~~ are frequently deployed to oil companies" (International Crisis Group 2006c, 9). These deployments are in a bid to safeguard oil installations from militant sabotage.

Though the spirit of most literature describes the presence of JTF in the region as defensive/security type, they quickly relate the negative effects of the few offensive operations launched by the force in the past. Asuni deplores the JTF's use of force in tracking down militants as alienating the populace and further gaining support for the insurgents (Asuni 2009, 14). Hanson describes government crackdowns in the region as having increased the locals' sympathy for the MEND (Hanson 2007, 3). Though many, like Daniel Elombah, prophesied that the actions of security forces will not end militant action in the Niger Delta (Elombah 2009), JTF operations appear to have limited the militants' activities and options in favor of GoN interests in the region. In the following

paragraphs, Major General Peter Chiarelli's concept and focus for military operations in a counterinsurgency environment like the Niger Delta are considered.

Major General Peter Chiarelli, Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry in Iraq in 2004, explains the need for a new approach to counterinsurgency warfare in his work, *–Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations.*” Chiarelli wrote in support of FSO, the current US Army operational doctrine, insisting that it is the way to inclusively address all the dimensions contributing to the insurgents' war efforts (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 7). The FM 3-0 is the operational doctrine of the US Army and is based on the concept of FSO. FM 3-0 states that in FSO, “Army forces combine offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations simultaneously as part of an interdependent joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 3-1).

In developing a situational understanding of the operational environment, Chiarelli insists that a keen understanding of what he referred to as the demographic battlespace as well as “the cultural intricacies that drive the Iraqi population” is necessary (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 5). To help define the battlespace, he went ahead to operationally divide the populace into three categories; anti-Iraqi forces, supporters and fence-sitters (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 5). In modifying this model for use in this study, the author substitutes anti-government forces for anti-Iraqi forces. The moulds and tactical challenges for each of these groups are discussed under.

Anti-Government Forces

Chiarelli stated that anti-government forces are insurgents ~~who~~ cannot be changed, who cannot be influenced and . . . [whose] aim is disruption for political gain (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 5). He adds that they are criminal-like in their actions and ~~take~~ selfish advantage of tactical and operational gaps” (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 5). Chiarelli surmises that these forces target dissatisfied regions for recruitment and states that they would have achieved their goals among such populations when the populace begins exhibiting various methods of resistance against security forces (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 5). Intimidation of government officials, oil company workers (especially expatriates) and security forces, as conducted by militants in the Niger Delta, is referred to by Chiarelli as an effective technique used by anti-government forces (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6).

Chiarelli said that ~~it~~ takes only a few of such insurgents specifically targeting a small group of individuals, isolated oil facilities or key points, to achieve resonance across a large portion of the population.” (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6). The 7 January 2010 bombing of a Chevron pipeline by militants after the amnesty program had been in place for four months was such an attack. It shattered the fragile peace in the region and gave some residents the impression that militants could still wield some degree of power (Amanze-Nwachukwu 2010). Chiarelli states ~~that~~ killing or capturing [such] terrorists . . . is the only option to immediately mitigate their strategic effect (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6). Another option proffered, though indirect, and probably requiring more time, is the ~~eo~~-option of the populace through IO in order to

deny the terrorist physical and psychological sanctuary in an effort to thwart their objectives” (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6).

Supporters

Chiarelli defined supporters as those who support the security forces throughout the region. He adds that supporters see the future of the region based on cooperation with a rapid government development drive (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6). Like the case in Iraq, when queried, supporters in the Niger Delta desired the withdrawal of the JTF but simultaneously acknowledged the importance of the security provided by the military forces and government developmental initiatives in the region (International Crisis Group 2007, 11).

Fence-Sitters

Chiarelli considered ~~fence~~ sitters as the operational center of gravity” for both security forces and the insurgent forces (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6). He said that fence sitters constitute the bulk of the populace and are waiting to see visible progress before casting their support for either side. Chiarelli added that they ~~consist~~ of all classes of people and form the base from which power is derived” (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6).

Chiarelli states experientially that insurgents can discredit the legitimacy of the existing government or otherwise undermine its political strength by influencing fence-sitters through attacks of government structures in a bid to visibly repress the resolve of the government (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6). Chiarelli further notes that in a ~~demonstration~~ of potency, the insurgents now step in and provide a shadow

government” (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005, 6). The alleged collection of security votes from oil companies by insurgents to ensure workers’ safety is a good example of this approach (International Crisis Group 2006c, 9).

In general, it appears that military operations in the Niger Delta have been focused on sophisticated groups of militants in a bid to protect strategic assets of the GoN from being ravaged by the insurgents. In the process, the populace has at best been neglected or worse still, suppressed. The GoN approach seems to use all sticks and few carrots with no effective IO to maintain the initiative in the region. Among other things, Chiarelli’s concept puts the people as the center of gravity, thus giving a good focus for military operations in a counterinsurgency as that being conducted in the Niger Delta. He also emphasizes the requirement for IO to realize the objectives of such military operations (Chiarelli and Michaelis 2005).

Relationship Between Military Operations Conducted in the Niger Delta
and the Overall Federal Government Strategy for Peace
and Security in the Region

The GoN strategy for peace and security in the Niger Delta is hazy. The International Crisis Group concluded that “the government’s management of the crisis has been devoid of a clear strategy” (International Crisis Group 2009, 2). Apparently, the GoN strategy seeks to employ the military to provide a secure environment in which massive economic and infrastructural development projects can be carried out. The former administration of Olusegun Obasanjo drew out a Development Master Plan for the Niger Delta which was estimated to cost about \$50 billion over a 15 year period (International Crisis Group 2007, 14). This development plan was to be executed largely by the NDDC.

A study of the trend of actions and responses of the GoN exposes an unclear but decipherable strategy. The strategy encompasses the four dimensions of national power but the emphasis seems to be on the military, economic, diplomatic and information dimensions, in that order of visibility. The relegation of the information dimension of national power may be a harmful oversight. The review of literature concerning this subject particularly covers the mandate and actions of the NDDC, the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, dialogues on the Niger Delta crisis and the possible role of the JTF in supporting the accomplishment of the peace plan.

The ~~N~~NDDC is mandated to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful” (International Crisis Group 2009, 10). The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs was created in September 2008 to address ~~the~~ challenges of infrastructural development, environment protection and youth empowerment in the region” (Thisday 2008). The International Crisis Group has reported concerns among the residents of the Niger Delta that the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs is a superfluous creation especially considering the fact that NDDC, which has a similar mandate, has been riddled with corruption and has performed less than expected in terms of making visible impact (International Crisis Group 2009, 10). Kogbara’s voice is passionate on the issue; ~~the~~ NDDC does not need to be replaced or eclipsed because it can do everything that a ministry can do if it is given the human and financial resources” (Kogbara 2008).

Though successive governments have outlined different roadmaps to peace in the Niger Delta, the author could not lay hands on a holistic GoN strategy, articulated for

enduring peace in the region. By following the trend of reports, the summary of the GoN strategy appears to be to use the military to ensure security in the region, mobilize for massive economic and infrastructural development while engaging Niger Delta leaders and youths in peaceful dialogues and diplomatic talks to arrive at a consensus for long-term stability in the region.

The Niger Delta states have received a greater share of revenue allocations, from the GoN, than other states and yet there is little to show in terms of economic growth and infrastructural development in the region (Ugolor 2004, 2). The creation of the NDDC, and then the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs, appears to be the government's way of prioritizing the development of the region. In spite of all these initiatives, little can be achieved with the continuous violence of militants unless there is some military presence to grant a degree of protection to the locals and the oil installations in the Delta. On the other hand, sole emphasis on military action has been condemned as counter-productive. As Torulagha insists, ~~the~~ "the assertion that military security alone will not guarantee security for the oil companies to do business is not an exaggeration" (Torulagha 2004, 8).

The present administration made efforts to reach out to the militants as part of its strategy for peace in the Niger Delta. The International Crisis Group in its journal article, *"Nigeria: Ending Unrest in the Niger Delta"* highlights the strategy used to win the trust of the militants. The first step was the release of the incarcerated NDPVF leader, Asari Dokubo, after close to two years in prison. The International Crisis Group noted it as more of a ~~political~~ "political arrangement... to defuse tensions in the Delta" (International Crisis Group 2007, 1). The second step was an offer of unconditional amnesty by the GoN (International Crisis Group 2007, 2). The amnesty offer, which has recorded tremendous

success, saw over 15,000 militants disarm to pursue new lives through GoN sponsored rehabilitation programs (Ohia 2009).

Noteworthy in this regard is the fact that Asuni had recommended an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for the armed groups. She stated that “in return for handing in their weapons, militants should be offered real incentives to rejoin society and forsake their pasts; such as jobs, training, and the opportunity to earn a living” (Asuni 2009, 24). It also tallied with one of the recommendations of the technical committee constituted by the GoN to reduce violent conflict and promote development in the region (International Crisis Group 2009, 8).

The third step in winning over the militants involved dialogue with group leaders (International Crisis Group 2007, 2). The Vice President, who is from the Niger Delta, had traveled to the region to hold talks with militant leaders (International Crisis Group 2007, 2). The International Crisis Group reports that initial talks with figures like Asari Dokubo made little impact as the militant groups were diverse and did not accept him as their overall leader (International Crisis Group 2007, 2). Media houses, however, later reported that the President himself hosted militant leaders and engaged them in fruitful peace talks (Archibong 2009).

The Aaron Initiative, a selection of notable Nigerians by militants to engage in proxy talks with the GoN is expected to yield fruits. The Aaron team consists of notable Nigerians, handpicked by the militants as advocates of their cause. It is led by the number two man in the country during the last military administration and a Niger Delta indigene, Admiral Mike Akhigbe (retired). Others include Architect Denzil Amagbe Kentebe and the Nobel Laureate and activist, Wole Soyinka (Uranta 2009). The Aaron initiative is in

line with the recommendation, of the International Crisis Group, for an ~~in~~dependent presidential envoy of high moral authority from the civil society and outside the region to lead an inclusive consultation on the peace process” (International Crisis Group 2007, 1).

Reviewed literature have not been able to articulate precisely, the GoN strategy for long-term peace in the Niger Delta. The author’s synthesis of information in this regard however formed a picture of the government’s strategy as using security forces to ensure peace in the region while embarking on peaceful dialogues, diplomatic talks and developmental projects to better the lives of the people. Currently, the military is the most visible dimension of national power in the region and largely shapes the perception of the populace as to the will and intentions of the GoN.

Role of Information Operations in Achieving Objectives of Major Operations in the Niger Delta

IO have been largely conducted by both security forces and militants in the Niger Delta. The prevalence of communication means in the Niger Delta, and indeed all over the country, makes information superiority an imperative in planning and executing operations. Literature regarding IO conducted by both militants and security forces will be reviewed in the following paragraphs.

Militants’ Information Operations

Many authors have argued that the militants have a more sophisticated and proactive IO even to the point of hailing their prowess. The International Crisis Group described the MEND as having ~~ex~~hibited media and technical savvy” (International Crisis Group October 2006, 6). Asuni attested to the MEND’s ability to attract international attention through the media (Asuni 2009, 20), while Hanson confirmed their

skill at leveraging international media (Hanson 2007, 1). The MEND is known to even release intentions of attacks by electronic means through its spokesman, Jomo Gbomo (International Crisis Group 2006b, 6). Though the name, Jomo Gbomo is fake, it has come to be recognized as the voice of MEND as most journalists maintain open lines of communications with him (Hanson 2007, 2).

Many works on the Niger Delta make mention, in one way or the other, of the IO conducted by the militants. Hanson categorically states that ~~–~~MEND launched itself onto the international stage in January 2006 by claiming responsibility for the capture of four foreign oil workers” (Hanson 2007, 1). It appears from that statement that it was more of a calculated release of information than the criminal kidnapping act that launched the MEND into international prominence. The International Crisis Group further confirms information releases by Jomo Gbomo saying he had ~~–~~sent emails to journalists with pictures of hostages and, sometimes, brazen warnings divulging times and even rough locations for attacks on pipelines, kidnappings and releases of expatriate hostages” (International Crisis Group 2006b, 6).

The militant groups have been proactive with information. Such responsiveness is however expected of a non-accountable leadership structure, unlike security forces, who have to vet their messages and align them with the intentions of the federal government prior to public release. The militants capitalize on the frustrations of the locals and use well-crafted messages to achieve their ends. The International Crisis Group remarked that ~~–~~the most potent weapon in the militants’ arsenal is the growing anger among the region’s twenty million inhabitants” (International Crisis Group 2006b, i). Asuni commented that ~~–~~while it is easy to discern hostility and resentment toward the military,

many communities have an ambivalent attitude towards the militants” (Asuni 2009, 12). Asuni’s assertion however seems paradoxical in the light of her later submission that the militants ‘rely heavily on coercion and intimidation to ensure that the communities that shelter them remain compliant” (Asuni 2009, 12)

On the other hand, there are testimonies to the frequent falsehood of the information released by the militants. Jomo Gbomo announces false figures of allegedly slain soldiers in confrontations with JTF troops and also posts fake videos on the internet created to portray security forces abusing the rights of civilians in the Niger Delta (Ngex 2009). This reduces the press releases of the militant groups to black propaganda, based on falsehood or partial truth.

The International Crisis Group narrated an incident in February 2006 when military forces bombarded oil barges being smuggled in Gbaramatu kingdom of Delta State. The militants quickly blamed security forces and claimed that the attacks were targeted at four villages and even mentioned that civilians had been killed. The International Crisis Group visited the villages and though it observed that civilians had fled the area, confirmed from the villagers that no civilian had been killed in the operation (International Crisis Group 2006b, 6).

The MEND might as well have many spokesmen, all trying to rule the information plane. This suspicion is based on a lack of coherence in their messages (Asuni 2009, 19). The issue, however, is that the public tends to believe the one that comes out first with news. This IO challenge may account for one of the critical stratcom issues determined by the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) which was to ensure that they came out first with the truth (MNF-I 2007, 293).

Security Forces Information Operations

Security forces have no solid IO structure. The Public Relations Officer (PRO) is the information interface with the public and the media houses. Media houses generally give the impression that it is difficult to obtain information from the PRO on the conduct of operations or to get them to verify the claims of militants (Majirioghene 2008). Media houses' competition to get news out first therefore makes them publish unverified claims. Security forces on the other hand have no dedicated media means and must ultimately rely on commercial media houses to get their messages out.

A major information engagement drive by security forces was witnessed in the May 2009 military offensive against the militant camps. There was better updating of the public on the gains of the attacks and the measures the GoN was putting in place to prevent unnecessary suffering of the civil populace including the quick opening of commercial waterways to ease the life of the populace after the operations (Onuorah et al. 2009). The success of the subsequent amnesty program can also be attributed to IO. The amnesty offer was relatively well publicized and the surrender of key militant leaders was used as an information piece to break the ranks of the militants and isolate them into submission (Ogoigbe 2009).

Operational security (OPSEC) has been a weak spot in security forces' IO. The International Crisis Group stated that the militants have informants within the ranks of the security forces and even gave instances of security forces attacking militant camps only to discover that they had been evacuated because of prior information received about a supposedly secret operation (International Crisis Group 2006b, 24). The International Crisis Group also stated that militants have an intimate knowledge of oil

company activities and ~~have~~ boasted of receiving information from men sympathetic to their cause as well as from oil company employees, wives and girlfriends, some of whom hail from the Niger Delta villages” (International Crisis Group 2006b, 24). Asuni, in the same vein, reported that ~~sources~~ close to Asari have suggested that he has been given advance warning of impending military operations against his group” (Asuni, 2009, 6). A notable example of information leakage as revealed in the news was the investigation in 2007 of JTF personnel because of a secret operation order that had leaked to the militant groups before the execution. Though the outcome of the investigations is yet to be made public, it is indicative that there may be moles in the ranks of security forces (Ojiabor and Adebayo 2008).

The exploration of narratives on IO conducted by both the militants and security forces in the Niger Delta gives a rough picture on where both now stand. Though the militants have relied on aggressive IO from the start, security forces appear to have finally woken up to the need to gain the information edge in order to achieve success. This realization is a step in the right direction. This study will therefore capitalize on this growing awareness in focusing the efforts of security forces to maximize the potentials of IO to their advantage.

Integration Between Federal Government and Security Forces Information Operations in the Niger Delta

The Federal Ministry of Information and Communications is primarily in charge of information management in Nigeria. There appears to be no central federal body coordinating and controlling IO in the Niger Delta. Information on theGoN efforts in the Niger Delta is given by the Presidency, the Minister for Information, the Minister for

Niger Delta or in some cases the Minister of Defense. However, the major voice heard on behalf of the government is that of the military PRO. The Niger Delta indigenes have in the past attacked the Minister for Information for making statements based on hearsay. This is due to the fact that such statements are made from the national capital which is 900 kilometers away from the region where the action is taking place (Iyare 2009).

GoN spokespersons and representatives have, in the past, made sour comments concerning events in the Niger Delta. Mr. Ibrahim Gambari was reportedly rejected by the Deltans from heading a Niger Delta commission because, as Nigeria's UN ambassador in 1995, he had defended the execution of the Ogoni activist, Ken Saro Wiwa, by the Abacha junta (International Crisis Group 2009, 7). After the 1999 Odi massacre, the presidential spokesman, Femi Fani-Kayode according to the International Crisis Group, –suggested [that]the massacre was a successful model of intervention” (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6). In his words:

When we need to be hard, we have been very hard. We were very tough when it came to a place called Odi town where our policemen and our people were killed by these ethnic militants. And the federal government went in and literally leveled the whole place. And proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has never happened again since that time. So I think that policy works. (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6)

The tension and unhealed wounds were only soothed when, in 2007, the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Luka Yusuf, apologized to the Odi people, and the whole nation in general, for the Odi incident (Vanguard 2007). Many national newspapers portray GoN insensitivity to the plight of the residents of the Niger Delta.

A major concern expressed in some articles has been the attitude and disposition of major actors in the Niger Delta crisis to journalists. For example, the International Crisis Group reports that local journalists and activists have complained of being denied

information about the financial activities of the NDDC (International Crisis Group 2006c, 19). Ugolor, in his presentation on media reporting in the Niger Delta, implicitly resented this development as he lists some of the EITI objectives as “transparency in the oil and gas industry and facilitating public scrutiny of the sector” (Ugolor 2004, 3).

The literature review revealed no formal structure for the coordination of IO at the operational and strategic levels. The available coordination could as well be an informal one between strategic spokespersons in Abuja and commanders in the Niger Delta. The dearth of institutionalized structures may be responsible for the lack of responsiveness of GoN messages and the unstable relationship that has existed between the security forces and media houses when it comes to getting government messages out to the populace.

Possible Information Operations Tasks in the Niger Delta

“In modern conflict, information has become as important as lethal action in determining the outcome of conflict” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-1). The US Joint IO manual, *JP 3-13*, the US Army *FM 3-0, Operations* and the *Journal of Information Warfare* were used as major references to produce a conceptual framework to consider IO tasks that exist or could be employed by security forces in the Niger Delta. Case studies of successful IO in Malaya, Philippines and other Asian countries were also considered.

FM 3-0 emphasizes the need for information superiority in FSO. The FM 3-0 uses JP 3-13’s definition of information superiority as “the operational advantage derived from the ability to collect, process, and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying an adversary’s ability to do the same” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-1). The JP 3-13 definition of IO is similar to the

preceding: ~~actions~~ taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. They apply across all phases of an operation, the range of military operations, and at every level of war" (Department of Defense 1998, vii).

The focus of IO in this research however, is borrowed from Yin and Taylor's article in the Journal of Information Warfare; ~~IO~~ from an Asian Perspective: A Comparative Analysis." They state that, ~~the~~ acronym [IO] will be used to broadly represent activities conducted by the state or its military apparatus that are IO related." They add that ~~IO~~ here will involve broadly; influence activities namely propaganda, political warfare, censorship, media control, PSYOP/PSYWAR, OPSEC, MILDEC, strategic communications, public affairs or media operations, and public diplomacy..." (Yin and Taylor 2008, 2).

Yin and Taylor also make a distinction between the US and Asian perspective of IO. They explain that while the US views IO as a force multiplier, the prevalent attitude of Asian militaries to IO is that it is an operation that could unilaterally win decisive victories (Yin and Taylor 2008, 14). These varying concepts influence the IO doctrine employed by the west (especially the US and Britain) as against that used by Asian militaries.

The Niger Delta crisis has widely been described as a form of insurgency. The US Army counterinsurgency field manual, FM 3-24, lists four functions that IO must accomplish in support of security operations. These functions are: ~~favorably~~ influence perceptions of the host nation (HN) legitimacy and capabilities; obtain local, regional and international support for operations; publicize insurgent violence; and discredit

insurgency propaganda and provide a more compelling alternative to the insurgent ideology and narrative” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2006, 5-2). These four functions are largely applicable to Niger Delta operations. The FM 3-0 mentions contributors required to achieve information superiority in operations. These contributors fall into the following primary areas:

1. Army Information Tasks: tasks used to shape the operational environment;
2. Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance: activities conducted to develop knowledge about the operational environment;
3. Knowledge Management: the art of using information to increase knowledge; and
4. Information Management: the science of using information systems and methods (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-2).

The Army information tasks are most needed in the Niger Delta as the dire need is to shape the operational environment in support of military operations. They will therefore largely form the doctrinal basis for this research. FM 3-0 further gives five tasks that make up the Army information tasks. These tasks are, “information engagement, command and control warfare, information protection, operations security and military deception” (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-2).

The spirit of the US doctrine identifies the populace as the center of gravity in a counterinsurgency operation (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2006). It therefore follows that IO must be focused primarily on the people to achieve enduring results. The employment of IO to influence the people has come to be regarded as part of the hearts and minds campaign.

The phrase, hearts and minds, has been much credited to the British General, Sir Gerald Templer, during the counterinsurgency campaign of Malaya between 1948 and 1960 (Dixon 2009, 5). Paul Dixon however traced the statement to the second US President, John Adams, in his argument that the American Revolution began in the hearts and minds of the people even before the war was fought (Dixon 2009, 5). John Adams described the hearts and minds revolution as a “radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people” (Dixon 2009, 5).

Dixon gave a reasonable distinction between hearts and minds. He stated that the battle for hearts is aimed at “winning the emotional support of the people” while that for minds involves setting the conditions for the people to “pursue their rational self-interests” (Dixon 2009, 6). He likewise debunked theories that the hearts and minds campaign demanded a soft approach, implying that the approach was not as important as the effects. Dixon gives three ways in which the battle for hearts and minds could be won. The three ways are; “good government and nation-building to induce the population away from the insurgents’ cause; psychological operations to persuade the local population to support the government’s side; and the use of minimum force to avoid alienating the local population” (Dixon 2009, 4).

Lieutenant Colonel Bridgewater, in his description of the use of core IO capabilities in the Philippines in the mid 20th century focused more on the defeat of the insurgents. He explained that between 1946 and 1950, the Philippine government rapidly lost control of the country to the Hukbalahap insurgency but the insurgency was crushed within three years through a daring and effective IO campaign (Bridgewater 2006). Two major events were responsible for turning the tides; the insurgents’ assassination of the

beloved late president's wife, Mrs. Aurora Quezon, which eroded popular support for the Huks; and the consequent appointment of Ramon Magsaysay as Secretary of National Defense in 1949 (Bridgewater 2006, 38). Magsaysay's IO, targeted at the Huks, principally employed MILDEC, PSYOP and what he termed as, special IO (Bridgewater 2006).

Magsaysay shifted the form of operations from conventional sweeps to IO. Bridgewater stated that the Armed Forces of Philippines' (AFP) ~~old~~ motto of Find Em, Fight Em, Finish Em was modified to begin with the phrase Fool Em to reflect the importance of affecting the enemy's information system" (Bridgewater 2006, 39). Bridgewater further relates that the deception plan included ~~highly~~-risky infiltration ...to learn about the enemy's behavior" and thereafter causing confusion and division in the enemy ranks by organizing units to pose as enemy forces (Bridgewater 2006, 39).

Magsaysay also changed the lopsidedness of PSYOP by institutionalizing what he called the psy-war and aggressively sending out messages targeted at the population, the insurgents and their recruitment and support bases. Bridgewater described the psy-war structure as a Public Affairs Office at the operational level overseeing 8-10 man tactical-level psy-war teams integrated into each combat team. He added that each team's equipment included ~~equipment~~ for typing, public address, video, and copy making" (Bridgewater 2006, 40).

The aforementioned PSYOP drive is similar to that described by Yin and Taylor in Thailand's long counterinsurgency efforts against Muslim separatists and communist insurgencies since the 1960s. Yin and Taylor describe this institutionalization as including the establishment of Thailand's Applied Psychological Institute in 2005, under

the auspices of the National Defense Institute, for training PSYOP units. Other PSYOP programs included the fielding of tactical PSYOP units and the dedicated use of electronic media for PSYOP (Yin and Taylor 2008, 12). In fact, Yin and Taylor stated that by 1999, the Asian Economic News reported that Thailand's military owned and ran 203 out of 514 radio stations and two out of six TV stations in Thailand. They also described Thailand's military use of satellite broadcasting to increase the military's reach in sending out PSYOP messages, while sending out psychological warfare teams to distribute radios to the populace and encourage them to listen to broadcasts (Yin and Taylor 2008, 13)

The final aspect of Magsaysay's IO was what Bridgewater referred to as special IO. Bridgewater's description of special IO was the daring exploits fueled by intelligence and executed as command and control warfare. AFP soldiers posing as the enemy, referred to as Force X, were used to carry out harsh actions against the populace to invoke their apathy against the insurgents and used to cause divisions in the ranks of the insurgents and eliminate its members (Bridgewater 2006, 40).

The foci of these IO tasks are captured in the Nigerian Army counter revolutionary doctrine. The doctrine subdivides military tasks in a counterinsurgency into consolidation tasks and anti-insurgency tasks (TRADOC NA 2008a, 66). Consolidation tasks are those focused on the populace. They include community relations projects; information engagement to make the locals aware of government efforts in giving them a better life; and the use of minimum force to maintain the support of the people. Anti-insurgency tasks, on the other hand, are insurgent-focused. They consist of efforts at publishing the strength of government forces as against insurgent weaknesses;

encouraging insurgents to defect; and taking advantage of schisms within insurgent ranks (TRADOC NA 2008a, 67-68).

The review of this aspect of literature observed the force-multiplier concept of western IO and the sole-operational concept of Asian IO. It also considered the US IO doctrine as a model for IO operations in the Niger Delta. Army information tasks were emphasized as being congruent with the focus of this study. The British and Philippine government IO in historical case studies of counterinsurgencies in Malaya and the Philippines were then used to give broad applications of Army information tasks. Thereafter, the author captured the people and insurgent focus, contained in the reviewed literature, as existing doctrine in the Nigerian Army counter revolutionary warfare manual.

Possible Policy Formulation on Information Operations for Security Forces

The MNF-I stratcom paper was used to provide a framework for coordinating IO at the national- strategic, theater-strategic and operational levels. The MNF-I stratcom paper considered critical stratcom issues in Iraq and described ways in which they were resolved and also made other recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of coalition forces through stratcom efficiency. It states that –apart from providing a clear-cut structure for IO and delineating functions to the organs responsible, policies must also be formulated for coherent message development, alignment of messages at all levels, responsiveness and the injection of knowledgeable and multidisciplinary staff into the mission (MNF-I 2008, 298). Also, new Ministry of Defense doctrine must be evolved for IO to include tested guiding principles and such crucial issues as interagency cooperation.

Like critical findings on stratcom in the MNF-I study paper, Mudgett's "Comprehensive US Government Strategic Communication Policy: The Way Forward" also supports necessary nesting of operational messages with strategic themes (Mudgett 2009, 47).

Although no work on IO policy formulation peculiar to the Niger Delta was found, some policy issues raised in the MNF-I stratcom white paper apply to operations in the region. Deliberate coherent message development, responsiveness and the injection of knowledgeable and multidisciplinary staff as part of an overall IO structure are particularly required in the Niger Delta situation. Applicable policies will therefore be evolved from analysis conducted in subsequent chapters of this study.

Summary

This chapter reviewed existing literature on IO and the Niger Delta crisis. The review of literature shows that a reasonable volume has been written about the causes of crisis, humanitarian conditions, militant activities, federal government response, multinational oil companies' role and western involvement in the Niger Delta even to the point of proffering solutions. A gap however exists in the description of military operations conducted in the region.

The review of literature reveals that in cases of insurgency like the Niger Delta, military operations cannot be ruled out in arriving at a just end. Though the military may not be the principal instrument of national power, it however must be wielded in support of other means. A greater gap even exists in the conduct of IO by security forces as a means of achieving national objectives in the Niger Delta. While many, even in the Niger Delta, support military presence, there is a call for greater effectiveness in the conduct of military operations in favor of the civil populace who are generally peace-loving.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this study is to facilitate peace and stability in the Niger Delta by using IO to increase the effectiveness of security forces in the region. Thus, chapter 1 of this thesis gave a background to the study and outlined questions that the research intends to answer. Chapter 2 reviewed relevant literature and revealed the general trend of written works. It also identified a gap in the general body of literary works as the near absence of works narrating the conduct of military operations in the Niger Delta region. This chapter describes the analytical methodology for the thesis. It explains the sources used; the means of information collection; the type of analysis employed; as well as the model against which such analysis will be made. It also highlights means of validating the results precipitated by the study.

Problem Statement

The GoN has attempted to bring peace and stability to the Niger Delta region. Security forces are the most visible government presence in the region and to a great degree represent the GoN's future in the Niger Delta. IO, though conducted by the security forces, do not seem to have been effective enough in curtailing insurgent activity and bringing solace to the Niger Delta populace. Likewise, some actions credited to the military have negatively impacted upon the important information dimension by alienating the populace thus, indirectly strengthening the insurgents (Asuni 2009, 14). The peculiar nature of military operations in the Niger Delta must be examined in order

to establish the aspects of IO to be emphasized. Furthermore, the required effects of IO on both the Niger Delta populace and the insurgents must be analyzed to arrive at ways and means of making the existing IO machinery more effective, as part of the process of bringing lasting peace to the region.

Sources

This research relied on a systematic review of many primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were information from officers in the Army, Navy, and Air Force who had served in the troubled Niger Delta region. Company and field grade officers with functional specialties or commands were interviewed as they are perceived to be in better touch with the effects of military operations on the targets. The author emailed survey questions to the interviewees and on receiving their written response, called each of them by phone to further query them on the answers they had given. This hybrid sourcing of information for this study is thus referred to as survey-interviews while the respondents are called interviewees. Other primary sources were the firsthand information given in reports by primary witnesses and onsite agencies in the region.

Secondary sources included information gleaned from journals, magazines and the internet. Data was also obtained from the Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and publications of both the International Crisis Group and the Council on Foreign Relations. A close follow-up and analysis of news articles and documentaries from Nigeria, and the Niger Delta region in particular, also served to help place current trends in the region in historical context thus facilitating a clearer cause-effect analysis.

Analytical Methodology

This research employs a qualitative method of analysis. Information will be subjected to logical analysis against a framework designed from the doctrinal concepts examined in the previous chapter. Mack et al, in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Data Collectors' Field Guide, define qualitative methodology as "a type of scientific research which systematically uses a set of procedures to answer a research question. Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves" (Mack et al. 2005, 2). Mack et al. further note the growing preference for qualitative research methods in social science circles and attributes the popularity to the "culturally specific and contextually rich data it produces" (Mack et al. 2005, vi). Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative research methods are more exploratory and flexible. The methods of collecting information are also less structured and thus provide a richer set of analyzable data, "sometimes even beyond the expectations of the researcher" (Mack et al. 2005, 4).

Units of Analysis

This research is designed to be broad in concept but narrow in focus. The face of the Niger Delta crisis is a fast and ever-changing one and demands an inclusive and durable concept based on historical patterns. A critical study of IO in the Niger Delta will be conducted to obtain broad based knowledge of the challenges and requirements of IO in the region. Subsequently, the role and impact of IO in three major operations launched by security forces in the last decade will be analyzed. These operations are; the 1999 military invasion of Odi Town; the September 2008 military offensive; and the May 2009 Operation Cordon and Search targeted at militant camps.

These military operations were generally selected as units of analysis because they occurred during democratic governance as against suppressive military regimes. The 1999 Odi invasion was selected both because of the amount of media attention it attracted as well as its impact on civil-military relations. The September 2008 offensive was picked because it was one of the bloodiest confrontations between GoN forces and the MEND who had earlier surprised the federal government and international community by attacking deep offshore targets. It provoked a militant counter-offensive which was overwhelmingly suppressed by the JTF. This particular operation revealed the JTF's ability to contain and disrupt deliberate militant offensives. The May 2009 attack was chosen because it was a deliberate offensive operation involving the synchronization of the JTF's air, maritime and ground forces unlike other operations that generally appeared isolated. It has also been the longest sustained combat operations launched by the security forces in the region.

Development, Explanation and Scoring of Variables

The literature review established the populace as the center of gravity for the form of counterinsurgency operations being conducted in the Niger Delta region. The local populace provides the support base for the insurgents and also serves as a recruiting base for reinforcing insurgent manpower requirements. Likewise, the militants are also a major target for IO efforts. This study therefore considers the populace, the militants, and a third factor; mission success, as broad targets in its analysis.

The variables that will be considered for analysis in this study will be based on desired IO effects on the three targets mentioned in the preceding paragraph. These IO effects will be examined based on the aforementioned case studies of past military

operations undertaken by security forces in the region. IO effects on the people will be analyzed by assessing the GoN's success at winning the hearts and minds of the populace; while the effects on the insurgents will be that of PSYOP, MILDEC, OPSEC, information protection and C2 warfare. The final variable will be the employment of IO in converting tactical victory to strategic success.

Hearts and Minds

Dixon's division of hearts and minds into component parts will be used to define these variables. Dixon defines hearts as "winning the emotional support of the people" and minds as facilitating an environment in which "people are pursuing their rational self-interest" (Dixon 2009, 6). The hearts campaign seeks to influence the populace in support of military operations and the legitimacy of the government while the minds campaign focuses on giving renewed hope to the populace by making them understand that things are actually getting better in their environment.

The battle for hearts will largely involve information engagement tasks. These tasks include public affairs, key leader engagement, PSYOP, counter IO and stratcom (Department of the Army, 2008a, 7-3). The minds campaign supports the rational self interests of the people. Security forces in conjunction with other agencies help in setting the conditions for the people to live in peace and prosperity. These conditions include security, restoration of essential services, community relations projects and the promotion of economic pluralism (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 3-12). IO are then used to help interpret these actions as being the hope for a better future for the populace.

Scoring for this analysis will be done on a scale of green to red, representing high to nil presence of each variable. A green score will be given to IO that effectively

achieves the desired effect; an amber score will be assigned to moderate effects; while a red score will be allotted to negligible or nil effects as regards a particular variable. The respective scores will be entered into table 1.

Table 1. Sample Table for Scoring Variables

			← CASE STUDIES →		
Serial	VARIABLES ↓		Odi Invasion 1999	September 2008 Offensive	May 2009 Attacks
Nil					High
1.	People	Hearts- Legitimacy			
2.		Minds- Services			
3.	Militants	Command and Control Warfare			
4.		Information Protection			
5.		Operations Security			
6.		Military Deception			
7.	Mission	Conversion of Tactical Victory to Strategic Success			

Source: Created by author with information from Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008).

Command and Control Warfare

Command and control (C2) warfare is targeted at insurgent C2 systems. It involves the spectrum of offensive action from physical attack to electronic attack. The aim is to “degrade, disrupt, destroy, and exploit enemy command and control”

(Headquarters, Department of the Army 2008, 7-3). This variable will be analyzed based on IO effects of security forces in disrupting insurgent C2; infiltrating militant ranks to exploit their C2 in support of operations; physically attacking C2 nodes to degrade insurgent operations; psychological operations to cause schism within insurgent ranks; and cyber action in exploiting enemy C2.

In assessing this variable, operations targeted at insurgent C2 will be considered. Subsequently, scoring will be done on a scale of high to nil. A green score will be given to IO that is achieving the desired effect while a red score will be assigned to non-existent effects as regards C2 warfare. The respective scores will be entered into table 1.

Information Protection

Information protection ensures that both physical and electronic data and information flow are secure. It includes the protection of information and information systems, computer networks and measures taken to ensure that personnel and equipment are shielded from the enemy's offensive use of the electromagnetic spectrum (Department of the Army 2008, 7-7). In analyzing this variable in the Niger Delta context, the author will focus on information assurance and the measures put in place to protect personnel, facilities and equipment from the insurgents' use of the electromagnetic spectrum.

This variable will be scored on a scale of high to nil. A green score will be given to IO that is achieving a great degree of information protection particularly in measures set up by security forces for that purpose. A red score will however be assigned to non-existent measures or successful insurgent efforts to gain control of the electromagnetic

spectrum at the expense of security forces. The respective scores will be entered into table 1.

Operations Security

OPSEC in the context of this study focuses on measures taken to protect essential elements of friendly information (EEFI) from the insurgents and physical security of installations and personnel. It also includes the protection of items like maps, vital documents and operation orders that may be used by insurgents to analyze security forces' courses of action and capabilities. OPSEC, in addition, encompasses counterintelligence and counter IO. Counterintelligence seeks to protect against espionage, sabotage and subversion while counter IO nips insurgent IO in the bud through proactive or responsive actions (Department of the Army, 2008a, 7-7).

In assessing this variable, EEFI protection, physical security, counterintelligence and counter IO in Niger Delta operations will be critically assessed. Subsequently, scoring will be done on a scale of high to nil. A green score will be given to IO that focuses on vital elements of OPSEC and makes provision for countering insurgent IO and intelligence; while a red score will be assigned to consistent oversights or operational lapses of security forces that have proved inimical to OPSEC. The respective scores will be entered into table 1.

Military Deception

The MILDEC variable comprises actions taken to mislead insurgents as to the security forces' capabilities, intentions, courses of action and operations. It provokes insurgents to ~~pre~~prematurely reveal their intentions, take unmitigated risks and commit

their forces without proper guidance” (Department of the Army 1998, II-4). The deliberate employment of MILDEC by security forces will be assessed in this study.

In assessing this variable, the incorporation of MILDEC into operations will be analyzed. Subsequently, scoring will be done on a scale of high to nil. A green score will be given, not necessarily to the frequency of MILDEC but to its presence and effectiveness. A red score will be assigned to non-existent planning or effects of MILDEC. The respective scores will be entered into table 1.

Conversion of Tactical Victory to Strategic Success

IO is a critical line of effort for the strategic success of counterinsurgency operations. Chapter 4 of this study will consider the aftermath of these military operations to assess how well tactical victories have been converted into strategic success using IO. Accordingly, the ability of IO to influence the situation in the region for the long term peaceful resolution of crisis will be analyzed.

In scoring this variable, the author will weigh the resultant effects of military operations against the particular mission and the broader peace and security mandate of the JTF in the Niger Delta. A green score will be given to IO that accomplishes the mission and sets conditions for long term peace in the region, while a red score will be assigned for tactical victories with no corresponding strategic success.

Tabular Analysis of Variables

When the results of qualitative analysis have been entered into the table, it will be easier to rank the effectiveness of IO in the case studies and make deductions concerning the current focus of JTF’s IO. Also, the relationship between the mission success variable

and other variables could reveal trends which could be employed to ensure success in future operations. In addition, tabular results will highlight areas requiring more work in the IO campaign and make a case for striking a balance, if required, in future operations. The deductions would then be used, in chapter 5, to build recommendations that could aid IO doctrine and policy formulation in the future.

Survey-Interviews

Survey-interviews were used as primary sources. The survey-interview had 11 questions addressing four major areas. The first area focuses on putting the core responses in context by understanding the interviewee's background, appointment, period of tour in the Niger Delta and his perception of the root cause of the crisis. The second area is the GoN strategy in the Niger Delta and the interconnections therein down to the tactical level. The third area is the nature of military operations in the Niger Delta, while the fourth addresses the structures and effectiveness of IO in the region. The survey-interview questions are at Appendix A.

The initial analysis for this thesis will be conducted based on all sources, but survey-interviews. The survey-interviews will be used thereafter to assess the strength of the deductions from the review of literature and the outcome of the analysis conducted in the study. The author will seek to confirm if the opinions of the interviewees agree with or differ from the spirit of the results of the study. The survey-interview assessment will serve as an immediate validation for the study or will be cause to reconsider the strength of the thesis.

Validity and Credibility

The peculiarities of the operational environment in the Niger Delta and the intricacies of the security forces' mandate were taken into consideration in this study. The thesis will thus prove to be valid for military operations in the Niger Delta and other regions that have similar situations. The face of insurgency is different for various situations and therefore, a common tag cannot be placed on all insurgencies. However, the analysis has been designed to encompass certain factors like culture, root causes, technology and motivation of insurgents that make insurgencies peculiar. The author acknowledges that modifications may have to be made in certain respects but is confident that the thesis provides a rich approach to making IO effective in any counterinsurgency effort undertaken by conventional security forces.

As earlier alluded to, survey-interviews are used as a means to check the validity of the methodology. The author has also determined to make the thesis available to the Nigerian Army for use in current operations in the Niger Delta. It is envisaged that the implementation of the recommendations of this study will serve as the final validation for the thesis.

Summary

This thesis seeks to evolve ways of increasing the effectiveness of IO in the Niger Delta as a means of achieving the objectives of the GoN and particularly, that of the security forces. The systematic collection of information and the careful qualitative analysis are therefore designed to put the situation in the Niger Delta in context and evaluate the effectiveness of IO in the region so far. The qualitative research methodology used, seeks to analyze the effects of IO conducted by security forces in the

Niger Delta in order to modify existing IO structures and evolve ways of increasing the effectiveness of military operations as part of a comprehensive GoN strategy for durable peace in the region.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION OPERATIONS IN THE NIGER DELTA

Introduction

This chapter analyzes IO in the Niger Delta crisis. Some research sub questions in this study have already been treated through a critical study of literature in chapter 2. Information from various studies were synthesized to obtain answers to some sub questions while for others, the analytical model created in chapter 3 has been used. This chapter therefore focuses on those sub questions that are pertinent to the research topic. In a bid to do justice to the thesis, this chapter answers three research sub questions which combined, answer the primary question of how to increase the effectiveness of security forces in the Niger Delta through IO. These sub questions are:

1. What is the nature of military operations conducted in the Niger Delta?
2. What form of integration exists between the IO conducted by the federal government and that currently carried out by security forces in the Niger Delta?
3. What IO tasks could be brought to bear by security forces to set the conditions for a long-term political solution to the Niger Delta crisis?

The recommendations based on the findings of this analysis will serve to answer in chapter 5, the question of possible policies that could be formulated to make IO more effective in the Niger Delta.

This chapter initially gives a narrative about the nature of military operations in the Niger Delta with emphasis on IO. The narrative considered the IO conducted by both security forces and the militants in the region. A critical appraisal was made of the IO structures, capabilities, processes, methods and tasks of security forces based on their

actions as well as their reactions to militant operations. Three case studies were thereafter considered and the effectiveness of IO scored based on an analysis using the variables set out in chapter 3. The survey-interview responses were then considered in order to assess the strength of the thesis and provide immediate validation for the study.

Narrative of Information Operations Conducted in the Niger Delta

The new wave of violent militancy in the Niger Delta has been categorized as a form of insurgency (International Crisis Group 2006c, i). Security forces have consistently targeted militants in a bid to maintain stability in the region. To understand the nature of military operations in the region, the disposition and modus operandi of the militants must first be considered and also the character of security forces.

The militants are a conglomeration of various youths who have joined the insurgency for several reasons; the most prominent being the desire to survive in a socio-economic system with limited opportunities (Hanson 2007, 1). The MEND is the umbrella group of the militants and is used to give the impression of a united front though reports have revealed that the various militant groups are not as united as they make themselves appear to be (Asuni 2009, 19). The leaders of these groups are well educated as indicated in their planning of operations, their media releases and the ever evolving face of the insurgency which takes cues from historical insurgencies from all over the world (Hanson 2007, 2). Though little is available on the planning of these operations, the author used various reports to form a picture of the flow of operations particularly in the aspect of IO.

The militants' modus operandi includes direct attacks on security forces, sabotage of oil installations, kidnappings, bombings and other terrorist activities (International

Crisis Group 2006c, 1). The militants are well equipped and have been reportedly seen with costly advanced weapons. They drove around the creeks in fast assault crafts mounted with sophisticated automatic weapons (Hanson 2007, 3). Funds for their operations are obtained through criminal oil bunkering activities, intimidation of multinational oil companies and ransoms for kidnapped victims (Hanson 2007, 3). Environmental degradation, socio-economic conditions and past insensitive military operations coupled with intense anti-government propaganda in the region have generated such distrust for the GoN that recruitment of young folks into these militant groups does not pose a challenge (Jike 2004, 695). The regional populace generally supports their cause and provides sanctuary for them in the face of alienating offensive operations launched by security forces (Asuni 2009, 14).

Dr. Ukoha Ukiwo, a lecturer at the University of PortHarcourt in Nigeria, asserts that “the ‘success’ and ‘resilience’ of MEND can be attributed to its shadowy leadership structure, its daring well-publicized attacks (using sophisticated propaganda and information technology), and its modus operandi as a loose coalition of autonomous militant groups operating across the region” (Ukiwo 2009, 3). Perhaps the greatest strengths of the militants are their knowledge of the environment and their drive for information superiority. The insurgents are conversant with the dangerous creeks since many have lived there all their lives. They easily transverse the creeks and vanish into marine communities when being pursued by security forces (Giroux 2008, 16).

The militants also continually attempt to undermine security forces’ OPSEC. The peculiar nature of the Niger Delta insurgency, and the probable collaboration of few members of security forces with the insurgents, make it less difficult for the militants to

obtain prior information about military action. In addition, the militants employ the media to attract not only national, but international attention (Hanson 2007, 1).

The task of the JTF is primarily to arrest the criminal activities of the militant groups in the Niger Delta, restore law and order, as well as ensure a secure and enabling environment for social and economic activities of the citizens and that of oil industries (JTF 2009). JTF operations have been mainly land based but the procurement of equipment and weapons in the recent past has increased jointness in operations (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). It however appears that apart from the tasks stated above, the JTF has been employed in support of other instruments of national power to limit the options of the militants and channel them to accede to the dictates of the GoN.

The enemy, the mission and the operational environment create both a dilemma and an opportunity for security forces. The dilemma is that the creeks require specialized forces operating against an array of militants that are more familiar with the terrain. Circumscribed use of force is also essential to avoid collateral damage. Asuni, in this regard, accused the military of indirectly aiding the militants ~~by~~ pushing ordinary communities into the arms of the militants through their overbearing presence in the Delta and acts of wanton destruction and brutality” (Asuni 2009, 14).

Current security forces’ operations in the Niger Delta leave much to be desired. Major operations are employed in an operational environment that calls for a new way of thinking and a shift in the perceived center of gravity. On the other hand, the weak leadership structure and loose autonomy of the militant groups are cracks that could be exploited by security forces (Ukiwo 2009, 3).

The major strengths of the security forces are their legitimacy and their superior training. The fact that security forces represent the intentions of the GoN in the Niger Delta grants legitimacy to their presence especially in the eyes of the international community. Superior training here does not refer to doctrine but rather the tactics, techniques and procedures coupled with an inherent jointness in officer training that makes joint operations relatively easier. The major weakness is the traditional approach to warfare which robs security forces of the ability to capitalize on their strengths as well as on insurgent weaknesses in planning and executing operations.

The security forces' IO must be critically considered at this point. How aligned have the messages of the GoN and the security forces been? How engaged have security forces been with the local populace? Is the Nigerian Government doing anything to better the lives of the Niger Delta people? If it is, have those projects been capitalized upon through a robust information engagement of the populace to win their hearts and minds? How much IO do security forces deliberately employ in planning and executing operations? Do military forces take advantage of the obvious schism within the ranks of the militants? How secure is the information and information systems required for the operations of military forces? How much deception planning has been conducted to mislead militants? And how well have security forces been able to convert decisive victories into strategic success? These questions are embedded in the analytical framework and will be considered as the author seeks to assess IO in the Niger Delta.

The military Public Relations Officer (PRO) is responsible for disclosing information about operations in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately, little has been done outside of reporting when it comes to IO in the region. The JTF tries to nest its command

messages with that of the federal government. Such messages are usually reactive and incomplete (Dobrovolsky 2009). The International Crisis Group reports that “the JTF is struggling with image problems amidst calls for its withdrawal” (International Crisis Group 2009, 4). It states that the perception across the Delta is that JTF personnel are involved in human rights violations, oil bunkering and other illicit transactions. It adds that PSYOP aimed at redeeming the image of the JTF are generally reported to appear superficial and hypocritical (International Crisis Group 2009, 5).

The GoN, on its part, engages global audiences like the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) about its efforts in the Niger Delta (Akande 2007). These bodies and nations have responded by supporting GoN efforts in the region. The US has partnered with the Nigerian Government in training and providing patrol boats for its naval forces (Gambrell, 2010). The EU has likewise contributed funds in support of the GoN’s peace plan (Umar 2009). There are insinuations that this aid may not be as much a result of the information engagement of the GoN as it is the efforts of these western nations to protect their energy investments in the region.

The JTF has equally tried to update locals within its area of operations of its intent and to ensure that the minds of the residents are at peace even as they strive to curb militant activities with force. The PRO maintains some contact with journalists while commanders endeavor to make good relations with communities in order to obtain vital information required for operations (International Crisis Group 2006b, 7). The security forces have also been scored low in proactivity. It appears that PROs are reactive and cold towards journalists and this has adversely affected the perception of the public towards military operations in the region (Majirioghene 2008). Security forces’

information engagement drive should be more proactive considering the sympathy that the populace has for the militants due to their perceived cause and socio-cultural affiliations.

The NDDC and Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs are the GoN's major agencies responsible for infrastructural development and socioeconomic growth in the region (International Crisis Group 2009, 9). Though these agencies have in the past been accused of corruption and incompetence, they have been able to put up structures to better the lives of the populace. IO is required to multiply the effects of these government initiatives established to better the lives of the people. The difficulty in winning the minds of the people by building propaganda around these projects is that the populace is fastidious. The reason for this attitude is not farfetched. The locals believe that the militants are fighting for resource control and that anything the GoN may be doing in the region in terms of development is like giving them peanuts from a farm that essentially belongs to them (International Crisis Group 2006a, 5). The challenge of security forces then is to craft messages that would be effective in winning the hearts and minds of the populace given the present circumstances.

Little is known about the deliberate employment of IO by security forces in the planning and execution of operations. The basics of defensive IO, like information protection and OPSEC, are inherently present in planning but the more offensive aspects, like information engagement, command and control warfare and military deception, have not been pronounced (Clapp 2002, 2). The counter revolutionary warfare doctrine of the Nigerian Army seems laid back in regards to IO; stating the need for offensive IO but not giving it enough priority and weight in planning and executing operations (TRADOC NA

2008a). There is inadequate media and community engagement training for troops. The impression is that the PRO does it all. On the other hand, the operational environment is such that tactical mistakes by the idiomatic “strategic corporal” can greatly diminish the strategic gains of military operations.

There have been reports of schisms and divisions within the ranks of the militants. Asuni reports clashes and reunions, sectarianism and the struggle for prominence among the leaders of various militant groups (Asuni 2009, 19). Nothing is known of security forces in the Niger Delta sponsoring special operations like those conducted by Magsaysay in the Philippines’ Hukbalahap insurgency (Bridgewater 2006, 40). However, reports released by the JTF have sometimes made reference to information sources within the militants’ ranks. While these sources may not be intelligence operatives, they have served as a steady source of information to security forces (International Crisis Group 2006b, 7). It appears that economic means have been largely used to exploit divisions in the militants’ ranks. Money is reportedly used as a weapon to buy leaders or influence them in a bid to maintain the fragile peace in the region but this option has a short lifespan (North 2010).

Information protection and OPSEC have been a major weakness in the operations of the JTF in past years. The militants have boasted of having moles operating amidst security forces. Asuni reports that militant leaders, like Asari Dokubo, have been given prior warnings of security forces’ intended operations against his base (Asuni 2009, 6). The Nigerian Army has always boasted of having loyal personnel and maintained that it is not divided along ethnic lines. In the final analysis such moles, if any, could be anyone enticed by monetary gain to betray the mission of the JTF.

A case in point was the secret operations plan sent by a former JTF commander, Brigadier General Lawrence Ngubane to the Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), General Owoye Azazi, in July 2007. The JTF commander, in the operations plan, had identified all militant camps, complete with their manpower and weaponry states and classified them as major and minor camps. The suggested course of action was for the JTF to attack the minor camps first in order to strengthen the troops' confidence before taking up the major camps. Unfortunately, the plan could not be implemented because it leaked to the militants (Ojiabor and Adebayo 2008). More efforts are therefore required in maintaining OPSEC.

Military deception has been employed by military forces throughout history to achieve surprise, reduce losses and win decisive victories. The Battle of Mandalay and Meiktila in Burma during WW II; and Egypt's attack on Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War have been lauded as major victories orchestrated by artful deception (TRADOC NA 2008b). Nigerian military history however has little or no account of military deception. The federal troops' 1967 River Niger crossings during the Nigerian civil war failed thrice because emphasis was placed on the use of brute force with no incorporation of deception (TRADOC NA 2008b, 28). Needless to say, casualties were heavy during each attempt. Current operations in the Niger Delta have no sophisticated deception plan, but instead place emphasis on the use of force. This trend must be changed if operations in the Niger Delta insurgency are to be successful and less brutal.

One major difference between conventional war and counterinsurgency operations is that success in the latter is sometimes difficult to define. The insurgents may be eliminated while the populace remains alienated, thus giving rise to various cycles of

insurgencies as successive generations rise up to fight for the same cause. In spite of developmental efforts, the statistics of fence sitters may continually vacillate as insurgents coerce, convince, incite and whip up sentiments of the populace by misrepresenting the intentions of the legitimate government. It appears that counterinsurgency boils down to a perception war which must be won in the information plane through innovative and effective IO.

As earlier implied, the JTF is responsible for the security of the Niger Delta so that government agencies can embark upon people-focused developmental projects in the region (JTF 2009). The GoN has shown some talent in converting tactical victories to strategic success. A case in point is the major attack launched by the JTF on militant hideouts in May 2009 just before the federal government's amnesty offer (Adebayo 2009). The constant pressure put on the militants by the security forces is believed to have greatly influenced their acceptance of the amnesty offer.

From the foregoing, a synopsis of the place of IO and the attitude of security forces concerning the subject can be made. Apart from inherent forms of IO, security forces only unconsciously stumble into much needed army information tasks which would normally multiply the effects of military efforts in an operational environment like the Niger Delta. Given this background narrative, IO in the Niger Delta will be further analyzed using predetermined variables in three case studies. The case studies are the 1999 Odi invasion, the September 2008 offensive and the May 2009 attacks on militant bases in the Niger Delta region.

Case Study of the 1999 Odi Invasion

Background

In November 1999, army troops invaded the Niger Delta town of Odi. Several young men had killed some ethnic Yoruba policemen in retaliation for the killing of Ijaw by Yoruba militants in Lagos some weeks earlier. They allegedly took refuge in Odi, a town with an estimated population of about 15,000 people. The GoN gave the residents of the town two weeks to produce the hoodlums. However, soldiers were unleashed on the town before the deadline was reached (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6).

Doifie, reporting for the Environmental Rights Action Group, alleges that the troops numbered over 2,000 transported in 27 five ton vehicles. It claims that other weapon systems and equipment involved in the operation were; four armoured personnel carriers with mounted machine guns; three 81 mm mortars; two pieces of 105 mm howitzers and other automatic weapons (Doifie 2002, 7). These statistics appear too wild to be true. However, this study rather focuses on effects than reports of resources employed. The Human Rights Watch, in describing the nature of the operations, reported that the soldiers employed weapons with mass effects, razing all but three buildings in the town. It also reported other human rights violations like rape and indiscriminate killing of civilians (Human Rights Watch 2002, 21). Doifie reported that the soldiers occupied the town for 10 days and left hate graffiti behind after their withdrawal (Doifie 2002, 13).

The recently elected President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces was condemned by the Human Rights Watch as having ordered the massacre (Human Rights Watch 2002, 21). Activists also censured him for refusing to offer an apology even after witnessing firsthand, the extent of devastation wreaked by the soldiers

(Ologbondiyan 2001). The then Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Malu, however justified the use of that degree of force by the soldiers explaining that they were acting in line with their rules of engagement. He elaborated that the soldiers had met with a high volume of firepower when they arrived the town and had to respond with a commensurate weight of fire to suppress the opposition (Human Rights Watch 2002, 22).

This form of attack on a community was repeated on 19 February 2005. The International Crisis Group reported that soldiers attacked the town of Odioma in Bayelsa State following accusations of a warlord killing a government delegation sent to mediate a land dispute between Odioma and the neighboring Obioku town. Seventeen residents were reportedly killed as soldiers set houses on fire, fired randomly and raped women. The Army press release was that the fire was caused by stray bullets which hit petrol barrels (International Crisis Group 2006a, 7).





















Scoring of Variables

Hearts

From the preceding narrative of the 1999 Odi invasion it is evident that the operation did not attempt to win the hearts of the people (Refer to explanation of variables in chapter 3 on page 58). On the contrary, the Army coerced the community leaders, gave them a deadline and struck before the expiration date. In addition, the incident was capitalized upon by militant groups to reiterate the need for the populace to support their cause so that they could be protected against the onslaughts of the military (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6). Doifie reported that the soldiers left graffiti that included ethnic hate messages to the effect that the Ijaw tribe must be punished for the sins of their sons (Doifie 2002, 13). If there was any form of goodwill for the GoN, it was

exhausted in Odi after this invasion. The hearts variable is therefore scored red for this case study (see table 2).

Table 2. Tabular Results for Analysis of Case Studies Against Selected Variables

			← CASE STUDIES →		
Serial	VARIABLES ↓		Odi Invasion 1999	September 2008 Offensive	May 2009 Attacks
Nil					High
1.	People	Hearts- Legitimacy			
2.		Minds- Services			
3.	Militants	Command and Control Warfare			
4.		Information Protection			
5.		Operations Security			
6.		Military Deception			
7.	Mission	Conversion of Tactical Victory to Strategic Success			

Source: Created by Author with information from Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008).

Minds

The Odi invasion was conducted with lethal weapons like mortars and howitzers. Houses were razed, men were killed, women were raped, and children were displaced. The Human Rights Watch reports that a bank, a health center and an Anglican church were the only buildings left standing in the community after security forces concluded ten days of operations (Human Rights Watch 2002 , 22). Odi was a ghost town after the

operation as the surviving inhabitants were too traumatized to return. The minds variable is therefore scored red for this operation (see table 2).

Command and Control Warfare

The physical attack of Odi achieved a disruption of insurgent C2 in the town. The remaining inhabitants thereafter never wanted anything to do with militants and have since lived under the shadow of that dark experience. Also, the militants were reported to have gone underground after the Odi episode as they didn't expect such a reaction from a democratically elected government (Doifie 2002, 7). Nigeria had just returned to democratic governance that year after many years of military rule. The militants assessed that the response of the GoN would be a rational departure from the highhanded days of military rule but got the unexpected. The command and control warfare variable is therefore scored green for this case study (see table 2).

Information Protection

While it is difficult to assess the information protection variable, it is safe to say that information about the operation was secure since there was no report to the contrary and no reason to doubt that information means were well protected. The information protection variable is however scored amber as there was nothing spectacular about this variable during the invasion (see table 2).

Operations Security

Although there was no known leakage of the operations, little was seen to have been deliberately done in countering subsequent militant IO; a factor considered under

the OPSEC variable. The author therefore scored OPSEC red for this case study (see table 2).

Military Deception

The only visible semblance of military deception in this case study was the invasion of Odi town before the expiration of the deadline given by the GoN (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6). The worst aspect of this deception was that it did nothing to target the militants but rather unfortunately wasted the lives of innocent people. There is no evidence to prove if the action of the soldiers was nested with the government deadline in a bid to catch the militants by surprise. The critical issue here was that no proper deception was planned to catch the militants off guard and minimize civilian casualties. The MILDEC variable is therefore scored red for this operation (see table 2).

Conversion of Tactical Victory into Strategic Success

The Odi invasion was barely converted into strategic success because of the negative media it attracted. The presidential spokesman, Femi Fani-Kayode was reported by the International Crisis Group to have lauded the invasion by referring to the non-repetition of the killing of law enforcement agents by militants in the area (International Crisis Group 2006c, 6). However, in hindsight, it is easy to see that his comments were myopic. It appears that the militants simply went underground to reorganize and return with more viciousness. The 2005 killings of government officials in Odioma and the 2009 killing of 12 soldiers by militants show that the Odi invasion was simply a revenge mission with no planned endstate to secure the betterment of the region (International

Crisis Group 2006c, 7). The conversion of tactical victory to strategic success is therefore scored red for this operation (see table 2).

Summary of Analysis of the Odi Invasion

The 1999 Odi invasion has been condemned extensively. The analysis has the hearts and minds effects on the populace both scored red. Targeting the militants; C2 warfare and information protection were scored red and amber respectively. OPSEC and MILDEC, on the other hand, were both scored red. Conversion of tactical victory to strategic success was scored red, revealing that the Odi invasion was not successful by the standards outlined in this study (see table 2).

Case Study of the September 2008 Offensive

Background

The September 2008 JTF offensive was set in a background of severe losses by the GoN. The International Crisis Group reports that the “country lost at least \$23.7 billion to oil theft, sabotage and shut-in productions in the first nine months of 2008, and about 1,000 people were killed within the same period” (International Crisis Group 2009, 2). The militants are recorded to have launched 92 attacks on the oil industry in 2008 including the 19 June offshore attack on the Bonga oil facility (International Crisis Group 2009, 2). On 13 September, the JTF launched a raid on the villages of Soku, Kula and Tombia in search of Farah Dogo, a militant group commander. The MEND responded by declaring an oil war the next week, which saw the destruction of more than six oil installations and claimed scores of lives (International Crisis Group 2009, 3).

While the MEND accused the JTF of initiating the attacks, the JTF's spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, announced that the JTF had been provoked when the MEND fighters opened fire on its patrol boat (Amaize and Onoyume 2008). The International Crisis Group reported that the air dimension was added to the conflict as JTF elements bombed militant camps in the creeks. The MEND responded by launching a retaliatory war, tagged "Hurricane Barbarossa," on oil installations (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The International Crisis Group insinuated that the JTF was at this time better equipped than the MEND and reported that through this offensive, it succeeded in driving the militant groups deep into the creeks and maintaining pressure on them (International Crisis Group 2009, 3).

A week after launching the oil war, the MEND declared a unilateral ceasefire. In declaring the cease fire, the MEND announced that it had simply reduced the offensive levels from "Hurricane Barbarossa" to an alert state codenamed "Tropical Thunder Storm" due to the intervention of respected Niger Delta elders and concern for the people of the region (Amaize and Onoyume 2008). The emphasis that the militants place on IO was manifested when Jomo Gbomo chided the BBC for publishing a story by JTF stating that 200 militants had been arrested. He accused BBC of taking sides in the oil war, openly wondering why he was not contacted in spite of the fact that he had striven to maintain open lines of communications with media houses. Jomo Gbomo added that the MEND was in the process of issuing cameras and camcorders to its groups so that they could record graphic pictures of their operations for publishing (Ammoch, Niger Delta Solidarity blog, comment posted on 19 September 2008).

Scoring of Variables

Hearts

The September 2008 offensive was like the proverbial last straw that broke the camel's back. The incessant attacks of the militants and the death toll for the year were extreme. The JTF operation capitalized on this situation of events. Therefore, though some of the attacks launched by the JTF affected civilians, support for the activities of the militants was already waning. Also, the MEND's indiscriminate sabotage of oil installations did not attract mass support as the weary populace did not see how those actions could benefit them (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The swaying of the hearts of the populace was thus more circumstantial than deliberate. The hearts variable is therefore scored amber for this case study (see table 2).

Minds

Security forces introduced an offensive air dimension during this operation (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The effects of the air dimension reportedly led to collateral damage and death of civilians (Amaize and Onoyume 2008). In its timeline of events in the Niger Delta, the humanitarian news and analysis office, IRIN, reported that security forces razed three villages in Rivers State in its search for a militant leader, Farah Dogo (IRIN 2009). The minds variable is therefore scored red for this case study as security forces were not seen doing anything to ease the pressure on the populace, to allow them pursue their rational self interests.

Command and Control Warfare

The JTF succeeded in attacking the C2 nodes of the militants and driving them deep into the creeks. The constant pressure maintained on the insurgents limited their operations (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The MEND spokesman, Jomo Gbomo, however continued to send messages to the point of announcing future attacks on oil installations with purpose (International Crisis Group 2009, 5). Thereafter, Jomo Gbomo continued to make press releases on behalf of the militants, with his personality and location constantly eluding any tracking effort of security forces (Hanson 2007, 3). Based on these two opposites, the C2 warfare variable is scored amber for this case study (see table 2).

Information Protection

Though JTF communication means appear to have been well protected during these attacks, information protection is scored red. This score hinges on the fact that various misleading casualty reports were released by the media and the militants before the official release by the JTF spokesperson (Umar 2008). See table 2.

Operations Security

The operational plan and vital information details, like the use of fighter aircraft, were denied the militants. Security forces also proactively launched a propaganda war capitalizing on militant weaknesses. However, they were overtaken when the militants took control of the propaganda machinery and cooked up stories like the one disseminated by the Niger Delta Solidarity blogspot.

Jomo Gbomo in the story had claimed that the MEND attacked a Shell Petroleum Development Company oil installation and killed the 29 soldiers guarding the facility. He added that they also apprehended a gunboat but later spared the soldiers after they had profusely begged for mercy and pledged loyalty to the militants (Ammoch, Niger Delta Solidarity blog, comment posted on 27 September 2008). The JTF spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Sagir Musa, simply waived the claims as untrue (Mbachu 2008). The inability of the security forces to predict and preempt militant attacks on oil installations; and their inability to capitalize on the unilateral ceasefire declared by the MEND combine to weaken the score for the OPSEC variable.

The MEND, through its spokesman Jomo Gbomo, declared a unilateral ceasefire on 21 September 2008. The reasons he gave for the ceasefire were the intervention of respected elders of the region as well as the sympathetic need to relieve the sufferings of the people. The JTF spokesman responded that the ceasefire announcement was well received and that security forces were not interested in using force to reach a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the region (Amaize and Onoyume 2008). While the spokesman's tone appears to have been in line with GoN objectives, the author viewed this as a missed opportunity to further emphasize insurgent weaknesses and magnify the strength of security forces. The OPSEC variable is therefore scored amber for this case study (see table 2).

Military Deception

The statements made by spokesmen of both the JTF and MEND give the impression that the militants were more involved in tactical deception while the security forces were reactive. After the MEND declared a unilateral ceasefire, the JTF spokesman

commented that –at the JTF level, we will continue to carefully and firmly monitor the situation. . . . We are open to the amicable resolution of this in-house crisis, hoping it is not going to be another tactical deception, which we are used to and are already prepared to contain”(Amaize and Onoyume 2008).

Though deception operations must be shrouded in secrecy, the statement above reduces the security forces’ deception efforts to a reactionary one. However, the ability of the JTF to surprise militants with the introduction of air power, which the latter had dismissed in an earlier statement, shows some level of secrecy but not necessarily deception in the operations (Ammoch, Niger Delta Solidarity blog, comment posted on 27 September 2008). Thus, the MILDEC variable is scored amber for this case study (see table 2).

Converting Tactical Victory to Strategic Success

The militants were pressured to declare the ceasefire but security forces did not exploit that declaration. The MEND’s future actions reveal that the declaration of the ceasefire was more of a bid to have a break for replenishment and refit before mounting further attacks. It also gave the impression that the militants had the initiative although actual reports revealed otherwise (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The fragility of the unilateral ceasefire, which was followed closely by a list of demands to the Nigerian government, was however manifested when the MEND broke the ceasefire early the next year (International Crisis Group 2009, 3).

A major strategic success of the September 2008 offensive, however, was the subsequent change in the attitude of the populace towards the activities of the militants. The fence sitters had begun to cast their votes in support of the GoN. Information

engagements of key leaders and populace may have been responsible for this attitudinal change. The populace expressed exasperation when the MEND broke the cease fire in January 2009 and launched an attack on Shell's Utorogu Gas Plant in Delta State (International Crisis Group 2009, 3).

Key leaders in the Niger Delta condemned the attack by the MEND which they said had criminal and selfish undertones. The International Crisis Group reported that the Izon-Ebe Oil Producing Communities denounced the action and decried the violent approach of the militants. The spokesman for the communities further suggested a ~~non-~~ "non-violent and intellectual approach" adding that ~~the~~ "the people [had] since grown above such destructive tendencies in the battle for their rights in the Nigerian federation" (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), which had been supportive of the MEND, lent its voice to condemn the attack saying that other means of resolving the crisis should be sought as the MEND ~~had~~ "been contaminated by criminals and [was] spinning out of control" (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). These comments indicate some success in the strategic battle for the true center of gravity: the people. The conversion of tactical victory to strategic success is therefore scored amber for this operation (see table 2).

Summary of Analysis of the September 2008 Offensive

The September 2008 offensive saw an improvement in civil-military relations in a military operation in the Niger Delta. The operations inconvenienced the populace. Thus, hearts and minds were scored amber and red respectively. As regards targeting the militants, the operation was scored amber in C2 warfare, OPSEC and MILDEC. It was however scored red in information protection. Mission-wise, the offensive was scored

amber in converting tactical victory into strategic success; since the outcome was more circumstantial than deliberate (see table 2).

Case Study of the May 2009 Attacks

Background

The May 2009 attacks on militant base camps have arguably been the biggest offensive launched by the JTF thus far. These attacks were in response to the alleged killing of 12 JTF soldiers by militants. The offensive, nicknamed Operation Cordon and Search saw the repeated synchronization of land, air and maritime forces in attacks on Iroko Camp and Camp 5 which is the headquarters of the MEND chief, Tom Polo (Vanguard Media 2009, 22). The Punch newspaper's report seemed closest to the truth, putting the number of JTF troops engaged in the offensive at about 3,000 and reporting the support of four helicopter gunships and two bomber jets in addition to gunboats (Adebayo 2009).

Three factors made the attacks of May 2009 almost unbearable for the populace: the limited accuracy of weapon systems due to the terrain; the level of force employed by security forces; and the extended duration of the campaign. The Niger Delta is made up of creeks and mangrove forests. The people continually transverse this terrain as they go about their daily business. The forests limit the fields of fire of direct and aerial weapon systems. Also, the shock effect from the use of conventional weapons, coupled with the extended duration of the campaign, proved a greater burden than the people could bear and accounted for more casualties.

The media houses quickly attempted to estimate the number of civilian casualties. Amnesty International estimated high casualties, stating that many people had gathered in

one of the action areas, Oporoza, for the Amaseikumor festival. The JTF Spokesman, Colonel Rabe Abubakar, informed journalists that security forces were only conducting a rescue operation for hostages earlier abducted by the militants and that the JTF applied minimum force (Rice 2009). The military offensive ended the next month and was followed by an offer of unconditional amnesty to the militants by the President, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'adua (Tehrantimes 2009).

Scoring of Variables

Hearts

The JTF largely engaged the populace with information about the need for the operation in order to control growing militant lawlessness (Onah 2008). However, the populace was not informed about the level of force that would be unleashed in tracking down the militants. When the offensive kicked off with massive effects based on the synchronization of land, air and maritime forces, the people felt they were trapped in an all-out war. The militants, though under constant pressure, sponsored messages of ethnic cleansing and genocide to discredit the federal government (Vanguard Media 2009, 22). The effects of weapon systems employed did not help the JTF's message either, thus causing the people to see the attacks by security forces as wicked. The hearts variable is scored amber in this campaign, only due to the efforts put in by the JTF to retain support for the government (see table 2).

Minds

The JTF used conventional weapons and synchronized the three dimensions of warfare in raiding militant camps. Casualty tolls were high and tens of thousands of

civilians were displaced; many taking refuge in the forest (Rice 2009). Businesses were closed down and health care was hardly available. There was no acceptable message for the people as the GoN did not make adequate efforts to cater for those who would be displaced in the course of the operations. International organizations continually impressed upon the GoN to call off the attacks citing the humanitarian situation in the region (Dobrovolny 2009).

However, after hostilities eased, the security forces quickly opened up the commercial waterways with messages thanking the people for their support and promising security and a better life for them (Onuorah et al. 2009). This act to win the minds of the populace occasioned the scoring of this variable, amber in spite of the articulated inadequacies. This amber score particularly commends the JTF for its effort to win the populace especially when contrasted with the militants' growing high handedness in the region (Asuni 2009, 12). See table 2.

Command and Control Warfare

The May 2009 attacks were targeted at militant bases in the Niger Delta. The JTF mounted consistent pressure on the camps and recorded notable tactical successes in the operations. The militant C2 nodes were destroyed and the insurgents were set into disarray. The JTF commander, Major General Sarkin Yaki Bello, announced that vital documents which linked the militants to their sponsors, were captured during the raid on Camp 5 (Vanguard Media 2009, 23) The C2 warfare variable is therefore scored green for this case study (see table 2).

Information Protection

JTF communication means were maintained in such a way that the militants could not break into it. Operation Cordon and Search constantly saw a flow of information not only within but also across the various services. The score assigned to information protection is quite strong in spite of a want of extraordinary efforts in this regard, because of the JTF's ability to protect information in a joint operation of forces that would normally operate independently. Information protection is thus scored amber for this case study (see table 2).

Operational Security

The general consensus by those participating in the operations was that there was adequate OPSEC in denying vital intelligence on security forces to the militants. The only exception regarding OPSEC was the rumor that the JTF had dusted off Brigadier General Lawrence Ngubane's plan, which was leaked to the militants in July 2007, and used it to prosecute the May 2009 attacks (Vanguard Media 2009, 23). The report that JTF forces recovered, among other documents, a copy of the leaked plan in their raid of Tompolo's Camp 5, adds credence to the rumor that a modified version of the plan was used for the attack (Nguyo 2009). It seemed that Tompolo was trying to predict the next move of security forces by studying the plan. OPSEC is therefore scored amber in this case study (see table 2).

Military Deception

The only possible form of deception that could be alluded to in this operation is the overwhelming force with which the JTF flushed out the militants from their bases.

However, if there was a deception plan, a study of the events leading up to and during the attacks does not reveal it. The military deception variable is therefore scored red (see table 2).

Converting Tactical Victory to Strategic Success

Among the three case studies, the May 2009 episode was the tactical victory which was converted into the greatest strategic success. President Yar'adua had offered the militants unconditional amnesty in 2008 which they responded to with a list of demands from the government (International Crisis Group 2009, 3). The constant pressure mounted on militant hideouts and the experiences of the insurgents in the hands of the JTF reduced their options and channeled them to accept the GoN's amnesty offer in August 2009. This strategic success revealed the campaign as part of a bigger strategy. By October 2009, over 15,000 militants had reportedly turned in their weapons to begin the rehabilitation and reintegration process sponsored by the GoN (Ohia 2009). The conversion of tactical victory into strategic success is therefore scored green for this case study.

Summary of Analysis of the May 2009 Attacks

The May 2009 attacks reduced the options of the insurgents and were successfully transitioned into an amnesty program for the militants. The author assessed the operation as being averagely people-focused as the hearts and minds variables were both scored amber. In militant focus, the operation scored green in C2 warfare; amber in both information protection and OPSEC; and red in MILDEC. The operation was assigned a green score for the conversion of tactical victory to strategic success because of the

consequent transition from the attacks into an amnesty program for the militants (see table 2).

Analysis of Tabular Results

The results of analysis in table 2 show some trends in these case studies and generally reveal an average score for IO in the Niger Delta. An examination of the tabular results reveals the 1999 Odi invasion as the worst operation and the May 2009 attacks as the best in terms of mission success. It is worthy to note however, that though the May 2009 attacks scored the highest for mission success; like the other case studies, it still lacked some in terms of people-focused IO.

From an inspection of the table of results, it can be observed that security forces focus their efforts and, of course, their IO more on the militants; especially C2 warfare. In all, the worst scores were awarded to the people variables; particularly the minds variable. Chairman Mao Zedong of China described the support of the people as the water within which the insurgents swim. “Drain the water and the fish die” (Dixon 2009, 6). The May 2009 attacks, adjudged the most successful operation, grades the highest in people-focused variables. There is therefore a need to emphasize people-focused IO if enduring results are to be obtained; like what the US is now doing in Afghanistan.

In line with the preceding observation, it is instructive to note that an emphasis on hearts and minds, in winning the support of the populace, does not do away with a concurrent militant focus. The table reveals that C2 warfare does not necessarily guarantee success as both the failure of the Odi invasion and the success of the May 2009 attacks were backed by successful C2 warfare. This research has no case study to explore the effect of a lack of C2 warfare on mission success. The tabular results could however

be interpreted to mean that coupled with a hearts and minds emphasis, a militant focus must still be maintained to ensure strategic success.

The fact that overall, the hearts variable is scored more than the minds variable is enlightening. The GoN still has legitimacy in the eyes of the Delta populace. Also, it is easier to use PSYOP to build legitimacy through a predominantly IO drive. For the minds variable however, visible conditions must be set for IO to capitalize upon in giving the people hope for a better future. This observation reinforces the need for visible government efforts, manifesting in social and infrastructural development, to win the minds of the populace.

Various factors can be identified as being responsible for this enemy focus in the conduct of operations. The operations narrative reveals that security forces undertake counterinsurgency operations as if it was conventional war. An urgent paradigm shift is required in this respect. There is need for a better situational understanding based on a thorough analysis of existing factors, coupled with the counsel of historical examples lest tensions are aroused, instead of doused, by the actions of security forces in the region. If this feat is to be accomplished, the best starting point is the evolution of new doctrine that would take into consideration the peculiarities of the Niger Delta operational environment. The doctrine must maintain a militant focus in anti-insurgency tasks but do more to emphasize winning the hearts and minds of the populace.

Accordingly, IO structures must be given due attention, especially those that have to do with winning the hearts and minds of the people. The IO drive must be continuous and not episodic. Dedicated cells for information tasks are required including civil-military coordination centers. These centers should be well structured and staffed to

coordinate aid and sustainment for civilians; both during periods of relative peace and in the case of highly kinetic operations.

A final observation from the table of results is that MILDEC seems to have very little impact on mission success. The red score for MILDEC in the Odi invasion and the May 2009 attacks still led to contrasting outcomes in mission accomplishment. MILDEC thus appears to be desirable but not essential. Although IO effects, and not resources employed, have been the major consideration in this study, it appears that the essence of MILDEC is more for force protection and conservation of resources. While force protection and resource conservation may influence mission success to some degree, the author's analysis refuses MILDEC a greater emphasis than it presently has in military operations in the Niger Delta.

Analysis of Survey-Interview Responses

The author conducted survey-interviews with seven interviewees. The interviewees were carefully chosen across the three services. They were company to field grade officers who had served in various capacities in the Niger Delta. The responses of the oral interviewees were assessed based on the results obtained from the major analysis reported earlier in this chapter. This assessment covered the root cause of the Niger Delta crisis; the GoN strategy for peace in the Niger Delta; the necessity, nature and mission of the JTF; and the role and processes of IO in military presence and operations in the region.

The root causes of the Niger Delta crisis, according to the respondents, ranged from corruption to external influence. The most recurring cause given was corruption; which was linked mainly to poor leadership and in one interview, linked to the greed and

selfishness of the militants. Some interviewees strongly decried the irresponsibility of leaders in the region saying that they did not justify the massive funds given to them for the development of the region but rather used the money for their selfish desires. These responses agree with the literature review which cites corruption, across the board of major actors, as a major cause of the Niger Delta crisis.

Environmental degradation and a lack of infrastructural and social development in the Niger Delta were equally referred to by interviewees as a root cause of the crisis in the region. While this factor is equally linked to corruption, two interviewees particularly commented on the role played by government and multinational oil companies' apathy in not checking the rate of environmental degradation. These responses agree with issues of environmental degradation, oil companies' insensitivity and government neglect which were considered as root causes in the literature review.

Other root causes given by interviewees were; the regional quest for resource allocation, perceived marginalization by minor tribes and external influence. The fact that the major agitation of the Niger Delta people does not fall among the main causes given for the crisis is suggestive. It shows that it is relatively easier to win the hearts and minds of the populace as their major need is simply to have better living conditions. The perceived marginalization of tribes appears to be an issue that would be largely resolved by an aggressive IO campaign capitalizing on honest and full faith developmental efforts in the Niger Delta by the GoN. External influence is more of a perpetuator than a root cause of the crisis. External influence, as mentioned in one of the survey-interviews, refers to the funding and equipping of the insurgency by foreign investors in criminal oil

bunkering carried out by the militants as well as external suppliers of arms and sophisticated weapons to the insurgents.

All the interviewees agreed that military operations were necessary in the Niger Delta. Although one interviewee added that in some parts, the presence of security forces was perceived as invasive rather than supportive, all the interviewees agreed that military presence had on many occasions prevented the unstable peace in the Niger Delta from degenerating into crisis or even civil war. Another interviewee explained that military operations have additionally served as a form of show-of-force mission which has been a useful PSYOP measure for deterring militants who otherwise would have been bolder in their activities. Another interviewee gave some insightful comments on the achievement of military operations in the region. He said that military operations had delayed the escalation of violence and forced the militants to negotiate. These responses agree with a deduction from the tabular analysis which dictates a sustained militant focus in JTF operations in order to influence the options of militants, thus facilitating mission success.

The interviewees generally perceived military operations in the Niger Delta as an internal security operation aimed at protecting key points of strategic interest to the nation. In addition, they viewed it as a temporary measure for maintaining calm in the Niger Delta pending the implementation of long-term political and economic measures by the GoN. The interviewees also agreed that though greatly reactive, the major operations of the JTF involved the synchronization of land, air and maritime forces. An interviewee blamed the reactive nature of operations in the region on the lack of a clear-cut JTF mandate. He stated that security forces have over time vacillated between a defensive stance and an offensive posture.

The interviewees, while attesting to the fact that military operations in the Niger Delta were internally synchronized, saw little harmonization between military action and the federal government's strategy for peace in the region. In spite of some perceived harmonization, the interviewees could not articulate the government strategy but vaguely referred to a roadmap of peace. An interviewee remarked that the GoN initially employed the military to quell uprisings in the Niger Delta but only sought to define and implement a peace strategy after the military-only option failed. This remark validates the analytical deduction that IO have been focused more on insurgents and the mission than on people. Another interviewee however observed that a greater integration of the various dimensions of national power has existed since the commencement of the amnesty program.

The interviewees in their responses implied that military action is more of a temporary panacea for the crisis in the Niger Delta. An interviewee described the security mission over the years as being marred by government insincerity and lack of transparency. Almost all the interviewees however agreed that the JTF's mission is achievable but only when properly nested as part of larger political, diplomatic and economic efforts. An interviewee particularly called for more proactive measures by the JTF. Based on the author's analysis of interview responses, the priority for JTF proactive measures should be IO driven and principally targeted at the hearts and minds of the populace.

The interviewees largely responded that IO in the Niger Delta have not been as effective as it could be. This response agrees with the results of the analysis of this study which assesses the effectiveness of IO as being average. An interviewee stated that the

JTF IO have been more of counterpropaganda while another interviewee lamented that military actions carried out with good intentions have been misunderstood by Niger Delta communities. This may be a call for more information engagement tasks on the part of security forces as found in the case study analysis. Though one interviewee remarked that efforts have been made to exploit opportunities for effective IO, another interviewee noted that such IO tasks should be more proactive and in effect, authoritative.

The interviewee opinions on the existing nesting between security forces' and the GoN IO ranged from good to non-existent. One interviewee commented that deliberate nesting between these two bodies was still lacking. Another interviewee attested to the existence of nesting between the JTF and GoN IO, but blamed the tortuous, windy and slow channels of communication for the poor responsiveness of the JTF's messages. He argued that the GoN spokesperson does not stay in the creeks and information structures were not efficient. The time lost while seeking to align hot messages in the Delta with the Federal Capital Territory, could reduce the impact of the message on the populace when finally released. This point calls for overhauling coordinating IO structures and instituting regular contacts to keep the JTF abreast of GoN intentions so that messages can be aligned at all levels.

Summary

This chapter began with a general narrative of IO in the Niger Delta, placed within context of the nature and challenges of military operations in the region. Thereafter, three case studies of military operations were analyzed using selected variables. The results of this qualitative analysis were used to populate an analytical table for further analysis.

Through the analysis of the tabular results, the author was able to make deductions about the current focus and major limitations of IO in the Niger Delta; as well as highlight necessary IO changes required to increase the operational effectiveness of the JTF. Interviewee responses were then analyzed to validate the case study analysis. Apart from the validation, the interviewees provided useful information on the status and the future of IO and military operations in the Niger Delta. In the next chapter, this study will be concluded and recommendations made based on the deductions from these analyses.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to evolve ways of making military operations in the Niger Delta more effective through the employment of a robust and aggressive IO thrust. This study assessed IO in the Niger Delta in the context of the historical, political, social and economic challenges facing the region. Having made an analysis of the role and limitations of IO in the Niger Delta in the preceding chapter, this chapter concludes the research and makes recommendations for the application of the results of the analysis. The author, in this chapter, also makes recommendations for further study in the Niger Delta crisis.

Conclusion

The author, in introducing the research topic, gave a historical description of the oil struggle of the Niger Delta people and the role of the GoN in the crisis. The evolution of militant groups was also traced, zeroing in on their efficient use of IO to achieve their political aims. Highlighting militant IO as a major strength, the author compared it with the efforts of security forces in the region and presented the problem statement which seeks to increase the effectiveness of security forces' operations through a more comprehensive and purposeful IO program.

In achieving the purpose of the study, the author made a broad review of literature concerning the research topic. Among other things, the review of literature uncovered the root cause of the Niger Delta crisis and delved into a doctrinal framework for the study.

The prominent root causes of the Niger Delta were discovered to be corruption (stretching from government officials to community leaders and militants), environmental degradation and the people's perceived neglect by the government coupled with the insensitivity of multinational oil companies to the plight of the people. The doctrinal framework was built mainly on US joint doctrine for IO (Joint Pub 3-13) with appropriate gleanings from historical cases of counterinsurgency IO by the British in Malaya (1948-1960) and Philippine forces' in the Hukbalahap insurgency (1946-1952). A major gap found in the review of literature was the absence of written works dedicated to the conduct of military operations, as well as IO, in the Niger Delta.

The methodology for conducting the analysis was based on the doctrinal framework established in the literature review. The author created an analytical table based on seven variables representing the desired effects of IO in the Niger Delta. The selected variables were; winning the hearts and minds of the populace, C2 warfare, information protection, OPSEC, MILDEC and the employment of IO in converting tactical victories into strategic success. Survey-interviews were also conducted to validate analysis and provide greater insight for the research work.

The analysis for this study was qualitative. The analytical table was populated with the author's analysis of three case studies based on the selected variables. The tabular results were thereafter examined to determine the status, limitations and challenges of security forces' IO in the Niger Delta. The major deduction from the analysis was that militant-focused IO is necessary but not sufficient for mission success in the Niger Delta. The study thus precipitated the need for a greater IO emphasis on winning the hearts and minds of the populace. The analysis particularly identified the

need for improved services in the Niger Delta, which IO can then capitalize upon in winning the minds of the people. Survey-interview responses were then analyzed against the results of prior deductions made in the course of the study. The deductions from the analysis have been used to make the following recommendations for improving IO in the Niger Delta.

Recommendations

The analysis in the previous chapter showed that the security forces are relatively strong in anti-insurgency IO, but weak in consolidation IO tasks which are targeted at the people. Certain recommendations made based on the findings of this study are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

Comprehensive Federal Government Strategy

It has been established that military action alone cannot provide a long-term resolution to the Niger Delta problem. There is need to nest military operations within a comprehensive strategy for the development of the Niger Delta. This strategy must be made public and security forces must be conversant with their part in the overall peace process. Only in this way can campaigns be planned over a synchronized timeline and with other GoN agencies in such a way that unity of effort is achieved.

Winning the hearts and minds is a major line of effort in the Niger Delta operations. It is grossly inadequate to attempt to use information engagement to win the minds of the populace if there are no tangible infrastructural, social and economic developmental projects which can be exploited in this effort. The GoN can therefore not wait for the environment to be fully secure before embarking on infrastructural

development. The FSO characteristic of simultaneity must be employed as stability tasks can be used to greatly shape the operational environment. It appears that construction companies are reluctant to mobilize for work in the Niger Delta because of the spate of kidnappings orchestrated by militants. In this case, it is suggested that the Nigerian Army Engineers, who are adequately skilled and can effectively protect their activities, be employed in developmental projects in the region. This move will not only help win the minds of the people but will also give the populace a healthy perception of security forces.

Training and Doctrine Focus

The current Counter-Revolutionary Warfare (CRW) doctrine in the Nigerian Army leaves much to be desired. Mao Zedong noted that while certain factors were common to all insurgencies, strategies must take into consideration the peculiarities of the revolutionary war operational environment (Tse Tung 1972). While the basic guidelines of the Nigerian Army CRW doctrine are time-tested, the manual must be refocused to better address the center of gravity (people), expanded to embrace the complexities of current technology and tailored towards the peculiarities of the historical, cultural, social, economic, and battlespace challenges of the Niger Delta.

The office responsible for “Lessons learnt” at both the joint and service levels, should continually compile reports, observe trends and come up with deductions on IO aspects of current operations. These reports would enrich emerging doctrine and serve as a wealthy source of history for future generations of soldiers. The doctrine could also be double-edged; presenting IO both as a force multiplier, as exists in US Army doctrine,

and as independent operations capable of achieving decisive results as is the prevalent concept in Asian Armies' doctrine (Yin and Taylor 2008).

The place of IO training cannot be downplayed. Counterinsurgency environments make it increasingly difficult to neatly separate the various levels of military operations. Soldiers must therefore be educated to think beyond tactics in considering the strategic effects of their actions. More aspects of electronic communications and cyber space technology should be wrested from the monopoly of the Signal Corps and incorporated into troops training. Officers and soldiers alike must be mandatorily trained on physical and electronic aspects of C2 warfare, information protection and OPSEC. The rapid contraction of physical space through electronic connectivity makes this an imperative and not an option.

Troops training must also include cultural education. Security forces take it for granted that Nigerians understand all other cultures within the country. This assumption is however far from the truth. Cultural understanding is necessary if the expectations and reactions of the Niger Delta populace are to be anticipated. In an operational environment where tactical actions of soldiers can have far reaching strategic effects, it is necessary for soldiers to have a basic understanding of the operational environment, the mission, and how their roles affect the big picture. The culture factor happens to be a major piece in understanding the operational environment. Only with this background understanding can troops effectively act within the principles of IO for the furtherance of the operational mandate.

Instituting an Effective Information Operations Structure

There is little evidence that a formal GoN IO structure exists in the Niger Delta. The military PAO is the visible JTF entity that handles IO in the region. The Army G6, Communications and Information Systems, does little by way of IO. Adequate IO cells should be set up to plan deliberate IO; continually monitor and analyze the operational environment information plane; speedily align messages; and execute certain information tasks in support of military presence in the region. These structures will make IO more proactive, intentional and responsive and help provide a common operation picture throughout the area of operations.

The power and influence of the media cannot be denied in the new world order. In a global village where perception is often viewed as reality, organizations neglect the media at their own peril. Security forces are not exempted in this regard. It is time for the Nigerian Armed Forces to embrace the media. The militants have attracted international attention by embracing the media, who were more than eager to do stories about the Niger Delta. Security forces must do more to put out their stories for the truth to be known. The GoN should establish television and radio stations which would be used solely for security forces' PSYOP. These media stations will be used to shape the operational environment by publishing GoN initiatives in the Niger Delta and emphasizing insurgent misdeeds and losses.

Another consideration with regards to media operations is the embedding of civilian journalists in military units in the Niger Delta. A civilian journalist was embedded with the Nigerian contingent who made the initial entry to set up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Intervention Force in Liberia

(ECOMIL) in 2003. The JTF should equally consider embedding media personnel in the Niger Delta down to battalion level as obtains in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq), being conducted by the US Government. The objective reporting of these journalists will add credibility to the operations of security forces in the region.

Creation of a Civil-Military Operations Center

Closely related to the preceding recommendation is the improvement of civil-military relations in the Niger Delta. The author recommends the creation of a Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC) as part of the existing JTF structure. Apart from ensuring unity of effort, the CMOC would coordinate the activities of government agencies and NGOs to cater for the needs of civilians during operations, especially highly kinetic ones like the May 2009 attacks. The CMOC would also ensure unity of effort in the GoN efforts at bringing peace to the Niger Delta. In this way, the impact of such lethal action on civilians will be reduced and the involvement of security forces in coordinating relief and welfare measures will help win the populace in support of government efforts in the region.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study was restricted to the effects of IO in the Niger Delta. In the course of the author noted the following related areas for further study:

1. Campaign planning in Niger Delta military operations.
2. Interagency cooperation to actualize the federal government peace plan for the Niger Delta.

3. Structure and roles of IO organs in the Niger Delta.
4. The influence of the media on the Niger Delta crisis.
5. Curbing criminal oil trade and the spate of small arms proliferation in the Niger Delta.

APPENDIX A

THESIS SURVEY-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. During the dates and events in question what was your position and job description?
2. What was the nature of your assignment in the Niger Delta?
3. Based on your experience, what is the root cause of the Niger Delta Crisis?
4. In your experience, how would you assess the Joint Task Force's security mission in the Niger Delta?
5. Based on your experience, was the mission achievable?
6. In your experience, what was the nature of military operations in the Niger Delta?
Were they independent operations or part of a broader campaign requiring synchronization of joint forces to conduct a sequence of events?
7. From your experience, what form of integration existed between the military operations in the Niger Delta and the overall federal government peace roadmap?
8. In your experience, to what degree have military operations contributed to peace in the Niger Delta?
9. Based on your experience, how effective has the JTF information campaign been?
10. As far as you could observe, how much nesting existed between the JTF information operations and the federal government information campaign efforts?
11. Based on your experience, what dimension of national power has been most influential in the Niger Delta conflict? (Dimensions of national power are: Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic).

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